1917 THE HOPEFUL MESSAGE AT THE HEART OF NEW EPIC

THE NEW EUROPEAN

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HOW WHATSAPP CHANGED POLITICS

WHERE EUROPE WENT WRONG IN IRAN

PLUS TERRY-THOMAS, FELLINI, AC/DC AND AC MILAN

WHAT'S LEFT?

FRANCIS BECKETT ON THE AFTERMATH OF CORBYN'S FALL

VISIT…

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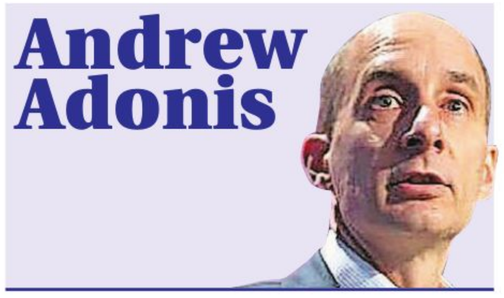
Ireland ready for a new era



The two victors of the Brexit crisis in these islands have been Boris Johnson and Leo Varadkar. And the Taoiseach's triumph may be to be the more significant as he steers Ireland towards a unity and confidence it has never previously known – not since the records begin of religious and political wars by British rulers long before Henry VIII.

The two transformational Irish developments of the last generation – the peace process in the north and the secularisation of the south – are coming together in a new politics which makes old divisions looks prehistoric. Brexit has accelerated this and could result in a single Irish state fairly soon.

This week, power-sharing relaunched in the north as the DUP's narrow-minded support for hard Brexit led to its humiliation at the general election and a surge for the two moderate SDLP and Alliance parties.

This was on the back of Varadkar's deal with Johnson. It is important to understand the full significance of this deal, which made Brexit possible. It effectively keeps Northern Ireland in the EU, in a political partnership with the Republic of Ireland which is halfway or more towards a united Ireland.

Varadkar has just called an election in the south which is likely to consolidate his position and enable him to take on the mantle of leader of all Ireland, north and south. Just think about it. In a fortnight there will be no British ministers in Brussels, yet under the Brexit deal almost every decision by the EU will have the force of law in Northern Ireland. So who will the region look to for leadership? Varadkar.

Consider the person of Leo Varadkar and be amazed. The gay, secular son of an Indian doctor immigrant to Ireland via England, where he married a nurse from Donegal via Slough. The family moved back to India before settling in Dublin in 1973, just six years before Leo was born.

The entire previous history of Catholic Ireland, personified by Eamon de Valera – who was nearly executed by the British after the Easter Rising of 1916 and did not die until 1975, two years after retiring as president – is a closed book to the 40-year-old son of Ashok Varadkar. Nothing symbolises this more than the huge majority for equal marriage in the 2015 referendum, followed soon after by Leo's ascent as Taoiseach.

I was in Dublin last year when the Pope visited. The previous papal visit, by John Paul II in 1979, the year of Leo's birth, saw a third of the entire population of Ireland celebrate mass with him in Phoenix Park. When Francis presided over mass in the same place, barely a tenth as many attended. The main event of the papal visit was Varadkar's speech of welcome at Dublin Castle which deplored the clerical child abuse scandals that have rocked Ireland. In effect he declared the country to be post-Catholic. It was utterly masterly, defining a new Ireland.

The secularisation and modernisation of the south is as big a change as the introduction of power-sharing between the unionist and nationalist leaders of the north, whose partisans spawned decades of bloody terrorism.

In the entire history of Britain's deplorable relations with Ireland, only two British leaders, Tony Blair and John Major, have brought about a lasting rapprochement. The change they made, culminating in the Good Friday Agreement of 1998, was so fundamental, it may have overcome the malign legacy of all their predecessors put together.

Here again, the last few months have been decisive. The reverend Ian Paisley's DUP, hard extreme of an embattled Ulster unionism going back to Sir Edward Carson who enforced partition in 1922 as the south became independent, opposed the Good Friday Agreement. Although Paisley reluctantly took part in power-sharing, because it had overwhelming popular support from a people weary of bloodshed, his successors seized on Brexit as a chance to reimpose a hard border with the south and reignite a culture war to stem the tide of Varadkar-ism.

Nigel Dodds, leader of the DUP at Westminster until last month, was the hard man behind this strategy, which had full sway after Theresa May lost her majority in the 2017 election and thereafter governed by virtue of DUP votes.

The Johnson-Varadkar deal cut right across Dodds. Johnson betrayed him as the only possible strategy to get a Brexit deal which would stick in Dublin, Brussels and London. I have no difficulty contemplating a United Ireland if it can be accomplished peacefully by consent. It is just as logical and desirable as German unification in 1990. It could relaunch Ireland, north and south, as a phenomenal European cultural, economic and political powerhouse.

It may even happen soon. After all, only 11 months separated the fall of the Berlin Wall and German reunification.

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The frontrunner with it all to lose

There may be months left for the race to run, but Labour historian FRANCIS BECKETT explains why he has the confidence to call the result of the party leadership already

Forgive the bold prediction but, barring accidents, Sir Keir Starmer will be declared Labour leader on April 4, and will set about trying to become prime minister in May 2024 – a task which may not be as Herculean as it looks.

Clear early leaders in Labour leadership elections generally end up winning. Neil Kinnock in 1983, John Smith in 1992, Tony Blair in 1994, Jeremy Corbyn in 2015 were all early leaders.

In the 2010 contest, though David Miliband was the bookies' favourite, he never held more than a fragile lead.

Going in to the contest, there was no shortage of senior Labour figures saying it had to be a woman this time. But people don't vote that way; they vote tribally. A Blairite would vote for almost any man rather than Rebecca Long-Bailey. A Corbynite would vote for almost any man rather than Jess Phillips.

Starmer is almost the identikit leader just now, right down to his name. It has a title – he's Sir Keir – which is reassuring for those on the right who worry that their leader might not be weighty enough. But his parents called him Keir after Labour's most revered figure, Keir Hardie, which will reassure the left.

Starmer has made his preparations. Before he was officially a candidate, I met one of Labour's most talented organisers who intended to leave Labour HQ to work full time for Starmer's campaign. A YouGov poll early this month had 36% of Labour's members supporting Starmer, 13 points ahead of Long-Bailey and 14 points ahead of Phillips.

He has positioned himself where Labour's soul is, which is neither in the Blair nor the Corbyn camps, but on the ground staked out by Clement Attlee in 1945, and redefined by Neil Kinnock in 1983.

Kinnock had been a member of the left wing Tribune Group, but found himself outflanked by a new, sharp-toothed left, led by Tony Benn and organised with a rod of iron by a clever, energetic, ruthless young man called Jon Lansman. After 1994, Labour's traditional right similarly found itself outflanked by Tony Blair.

Starmer's is the Labour Party of wealth redistribution, of nationalisation as a tool but not as a dogma, of slaying the "five giants" in Beveridge's landmark 1943 report: want, disease, ignorance, squalor and idleness – the party that unashamedly calls itself socialist, but avoids defining the word too rigidly.

Emily Thornberry occupies the same ground. As shadow foreign secretary, she regularly showed up foreign secretary Boris Johnson for the lazy buffoon he is, and it must seem a bitter irony to her that the buffoon is now prime minister while she has to struggle to stay on the ballot paper for the leadership of the opposition.

She made it through the first round, getting just enough MPs and MEPs. Now comes the task of getting sufficient nominations from Constituency Labour Parties, then trade unions or affiliated organisations.

Thornberry was damaged by the Corbyn strategists' decision to keep her away from broadcasting during the election.

When foreign affairs were in the news, they persisted in fielding some minor figure, for fear of allowing the fluent and always well briefed Thornberry to display her passion and formidable grasp of the issues.

Now that Clive Lewis has fallen at the first hurdle, Thornberry joins Starmer, Long-Bailey, Phillips and Lisa Nandy in the race.

Long-Bailey might have been the favourite if the election defeat had been less devastating. As it is, being Corbyn's anointed candidate is a millstone about her neck. Of course it will win her votes from the true believers, but she needs more than that.

IDENTIKIT LEADER: Sir Keir Starmer faces a challenge for the Labour leadership from, from left, Rebecca Long-Bailey, Lisa Nandy, Jess Phillips and Emily Thornberry

Photos: Getty Images

The more pragmatic of those who voted for Corbyn are already migrating to the Starmer camp, and he is making it easy for them with statements like this: "We have to be bold enough to say the free market model doesn't produce, doesn't work... the trickle-down effect didn't happen. We have to rebuild an economic model that reduces inequality and protects working people."

Long-Bailey may have publicly given Corbyn 10 out of 10 for his leadership, but she has wisely refused to allow Corbyn's strategists Seumas Milne and Karie Murphy anywhere near her campaign. "She thinks they're toxic," an informed source told me.

There may be a late surge of new members and supporters joining the party to vote for Long-Bailey, but people are also joining to support Starmer or simply to oppose Corbyn's candidate.

Phillips and Nandy are both, for the moment, defined by their resignation from Corbyn's front bench and their support for Owen Smith's challenge to Corbyn's leadership in 2016.

Despite brave noises from Corbyn's true believers, last month saw Labour's worst defeat since the 1930s – worse than Michael Foot's in 1983. And in 1983 the Conservatives were led by Margaret Thatcher, who was always on top of her brief, always prepared, always well groomed, always formidable, respected by friends and foes alike. In 2019 they were led by Boris Johnson.

There was a clear majority in the

country for Remain – and a clear majority of votes cast in the election were for Remain parties, if you include Labour, which promised a second referendum.

Out of all that, Corbyn and the Liberal Democrats somehow contrived to give us five years when Johnson can do whatever he likes, and a Brexit which a clear majority of voters do not want.

How did they do that? I think the election was lost on one day in June 2018, when Corbyn and his staff met the Board of Deputies of British Jews to try to agree a way forward on tackling anti-Semitism. The then Board president, Jonathan Arkush, told me that he did not want Corbyn to be forced out as leader, and he did not think Corbyn was an anti-Semite. Corbyn, Arkush told me, could be "part of the solution, not part of the problem".

The Labour leader welcomed the Board delegation courteously, sat them down – and then clammed up, leaving almost all the talking to his communications chief Seumas Milne, who became animated on the subject of Israel, accusing it of ethnic cleansing.

The Board went away with the sense that Corbyn was uninterested in the issue. Not long afterwards Arkush was calling Corbyn an anti-Semite.

Come the election, I talked to a prominent Jewish lawyer – a thoughtful, liberal-minded man who had voted Remain. Surely, I said, he could not bear to vote for Johnson? He looked at his shoes and said: "Well, I voted for Mike Freer." Freer was his Conservative candidate in Finchley and Golders Green. He could not even vote for his Lib Dem candidate Luciana Berger – because her party might briefly support a Corbyn premiership in order to secure a second referendum.

The effect of the anti-Semitism row went way beyond the Jewish community and the so-called 'bagel belt' of North London seats with a high proportion of Jewish voters. It is not only Jews who are disgusted by anti-Semitism.

Voters felt that Corbyn would not engage with the issue. He left the handling of it to aides like Milne and Karie Murphy. Officials gave the impression of giving ground inch by inch, reluctantly and with bad grace.

So if I were Starmer, my top priority would be to engage with Jewish concerns. It means doing what Arkush told me he had hoped Corbyn would do: making it his issue.

Corbyn also failed to engage with Brexit, and the need to do that has not gone away – in fact it will get more urgent. Corbyn always gave the impression, when he had to talk about Brexit, that he really wanted to talk about something else – which he probably did.

A harder task will be to convince the right and left of the party that sitting in their dugouts shouting "traitor" and "loser" at each other is not an election-winning strategy, and will not deliver socialism.

Starmer is carefully positioning himself as the candidate who can do that, gently chiding everyone for being rude to each other. I predict he will have a carefully balanced, female-heavy top team.

I would not be surprised to see Long-Bailey as shadow chancellor and Yvette Cooper slotting back into her old role as shadow home secretary, while Thornberry keeps the foreign affairs brief.

Can the supertanker be turned around in time for an election in May 2024? Normally you would have to say: no, the gap is too big. It will need two parliaments to turn that round.

But these are not normal times. Corbyn, through incompetence rather than malevolence, made himself the problem. He was poison on the doorstep. A new opinion poll for the *Independent* says that voters liked the party's policies on issues like nationalisation, climate change and taxation until they were told they were linked to Corbyn.

Many voters hated Brexit – but not as much as they feared Corbyn. Many Labour Party people are looking to Keir Starmer as the man who can give socialism a human face.

Labour's toxic problem will take longer to resolve

Will a new leader bring an end to the party's anti-Semitism crisis? Former member ADAM LANGLEBEN fears the issue is too deeply-rooted for that to happen without tough action

So is it all over yet? What has felt at times like an abusive relationship with the Labour Party over the last five years might finally be coming to an end. There might, just might, be a moment soon when mainstream centre left Jews like me feel more comfortable inside Labour spaces, and my community no longer views the party as an existential threat to our existence in this country.

Yes, we still await the outcome of the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) investigation into allegations of institutional anti-Semitism in Labour. And yes, Jeremy Corbyn *still* hasn't gone. But all of the candidates standing to replace him represent an improvement, because it really couldn't get much worse…

Yet despite my hopes for a better future, the Jew in me – influenced by generations of things going terribly wrong – tells me not to be so optimistic. One of the main reasons for my misgivings is that power in the Labour Party no longer lies with the leadership as it once did.

That means there is no silver bullet with which a new leader can resolve this issue. Whoever is elected in April will be constantly looking over their shoulder, not to Len McCluskey or any other union baron, nor to the Murdoch press, but to the membership.

Ordinarily this could be a good thing. If the membership were more reflective of the wider Labour-voting – or Labour-sympathetic – public this would be an ideal situation to be in. But it's not. The membership, in its current complexion, has been radicalised to a frightening extent since 2015.

There has probably always been a small number of hard-left anti-Semites in the party, but they were previously silent members. In the last five years, however, their ranks have ballooned.

This does not mean that most Labour members are anti-Semitic, by any means. But there is a significant number. An anti-Semitic caucus now exists in the party.

As someone who joined in 2006 (and left last year), I saw this change occur with my own eyes.

No one should be under any illusions about what has happened to the party in the last five years. The process of radicalisation has involved extremists in the party preying on the genuine and honest frustrations that some people hold about politics and giving those frustrations a target. Throughout the country, in a number of Constituency Labour Parties (CLPs), those with politics that are opposed to the central aims of parliamentary and democratic socialism now hold office. Many of those same people are anti-Semites.

They hold sway in decision-making and have influence when choosing candidates, from council level to parliament. Their politics has been normalised in party discourse and, for these people, power in the party comes above power in the country.

The story of precisely how it happened, how it spread and was replicated across the country, is simple. And I must take my own share of the blame.

In 2015, when thousands upon thousands of good, honourable people joined the party, inspired by Jeremy Corbyn's message of hope and a return to 'old Labour', the party establishment – including people like me – didn't trust this new intake.

Many of us opposed Corbyn, for a variety of reasons, and we didn't necessarily create spaces that welcomed these new members. This failure is something I deeply regret. Frustrated new joiners were desperate to get involved in their local parties, but couldn't navigate the archaic processes and didn't trust the old guard. While none of this justifies what has happened, it does provide the context for how the radicalisation happened.

The only people among this new intake who knew how to navigate Labour's structures were those who had previously been in the party but had either left voluntarily or been thrown out, mostly at the time of the Militant Tendency. What tied the good, honourable, new members to the older, 'Trottier' anti-Semites was a shared belief in Corbyn and an opposition to the establishment within the party – an opposition to people like me and others, who are now defined as 'moderates'.

People who I used to see protesting against Labour councils and advising

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people to vote for TUSC, Respect or Socialist Party candidates were suddenly in the fold and, before long, some of them were in control. In many places, these people became *de facto* local leaders. And among them were a number who held problematic views towards Jews.

Back in the party, often in positions of influence, they had a captive audience of new members with limited understanding of anti-Semitism who looked to them for leadership. The situation became further entrenched by the bunker mentality of the party leadership in the early years of the Corbyn era.

Over a short period of time, then, many among the party's grassroots became radicalised by people with a certain way of thinking. And one aspect of that way of thinking is a dislike, distrust and prejudice towards Jews. It was often disguised, with 'anti-capitalism', 'anti-Americanism' or 'anti-Zionism' used as useful covers. This allowed the expression of prejudice without the guilt that any progressive should feel towards holding a racist outlook. When it came to this particularly minority, my community, too often there were supposedly justifiable reasons rooted in leftist thinking and ideology to hold this hate and espouse it. The poison comes from many different directions.

For some it comes from a simplistic view of the Israel-Palestinian Middle East conflict that is devoid of any nuance.

For others, it is from a bastardised interpretation of Marxism epitomised by Trotskyist group Socialist Fight and its promotion of a book titled *The Jewish Question: A Marxist Interpretation*. Some of the organisation's leading members, including (now expelled) Gerry Downing, joined Labour in 2015. One Socialist Fight document asked: "How to explain the current situation then, when far from Jews being pariahs and rejected by capitalism, Jews are revered by capital and a form of Jewish nationalism – Zionism, exercises enormous power in the imperialist world? Why are Jews so overrepresented among the most strident spokespeople for capitalist reaction – the neo-conservatives and neo-liberal ideologues?"

For some, the poison comes not via Marxism but from classic, medieval Christian anti-Semitism. When I was a councillor I received an email from a Labour member telling me that I was trying to "take down JC just like you did before". On social media, another claimed I "didn't have human blood". While for others, the prejudice seems to come straight from the pages of *Der Stürmer*, with a sinister obsession with the idea of a powerful Jew pulling the strings, whether it be George Soros or Sheldon Adelson, Lord Levy or Jon Lansman. It makes no difference what politics the individual preaches, the accusation is always the same: the person is corrupt, intent on deceiving the public and up to no good. This is appetising for people to believe because it's easy.

For a membership that often felt under attack from the party establishment and a hostile media, Jews were often the easy scapegoat. Sometimes it meant directly targeting Jewish individuals or businesses, at other times it was the general use of the term 'Zionist', directed almost exclusively at Jews, as a term of abuse. For the more hardcore, Holocaust denial became acceptable in some Labour circles. Discussions about the 'over-representation of Jews in the capitalist ruling class' could be held without much objection. People who in some cases espoused genocidal anti-Semitism were allowed to be in meetings and spread their poison.

The only Jews who avoided such hostility were those who bought into the prejudice against their own or passed a 'purity' test in terms of their politics.

When Jews in the party tried to call out this behaviour, we were told it was just about Israel, even when the abuse had nothing to do with Israel. We were accused of crying wolf, creating a smear or 'being Tories'. This in itself amplified the anti-Semitism and turned the issue into a political argument as opposed to a form of hate.

The leadership bunker mentality continued, meanwhile. Following the recent announcement from the Metropolitan Police that five cases of anti-Semitism in the party have been passed to prosecutors for a decision on whether to bring charges, it emerged Labour didn't even bother telling the MPs targeted that threats had been made against them.

The Labour Party since 2015 is a case study in radicalisation of a movement. Members' response to that year's general election loss, and the party rule changes brought in as a result, created the fertile ground for it to occur, even if that was never the intent.

Corbyn was the carrier for this sickness, although it has now spread well beyond him, to a point where he could no longer control it, even if he had a will to do so.

Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn
Photo: Getty Images

After all, even his leadership's supposed preferred candidate for succession, Rebecca Long-Bailey, has faced attacks from hard left anti-Semites. Since launching her campaign, she has been accused of being under the control of Momentum chairman Jon Lansman (who happens to be a Jew) and preparing to go "straight into bed with the JLM" (Jewish Labour Movement), if she is elected.

The JLM is one of Labour's oldest affiliated organisations, dating back to 1920. Its longstanding link to the party is a sign of the role that organised, working class Jewish communities played in creating it in the first place. Today, however, many members accuse it of being a front for the Tories or the Israeli embassy.

Now that Corbyn is going, it is the responsibility of those left – and, especially, all those seeking to replace him – to try and cleanse the party of the sickness that has gained a foothold. As I say, there is no silver bullet, but there are five steps that could help deal with it:

All candidates for the leadership and deputy leadership must pledge to implement in full all recommendations made by the EHRC at the conclusion of its investigation. No ifs, not buts. This could be hard. If the EHRC recommend any changes to Labour rules then this will need to be approved by its party conference. Conference itself has become a very unwelcoming place for Jews in recent years and there is some doubt that conference delegates would accept these changes.

The party must also fulfil the simple requests laid out by the mainstream representative leadership of the British Jewish community, including an independent complaints system.

It should also implement the 19 technical suggestions made by the party's only Jewish affiliate, the Jewish Labour Movement.

It should show leadership by prescribing the organisations which have sought to minimise the issue, notably Pete Willsman's Campaign for Labour Party Democracy (which defended him for his comments that Jewish "Trump fanatics" were behind accusations of anti-Semitism in Labour ranks), the Labour Representation Committee, Labour Against the Witchhunt and Jewish Voice for Labour (the latter three all have a substantial crossover in leadership). My view is that no one with any connections with these bodies should be anywhere near positions of power.

It must acknowledge that it is the responsibility of the leadership to set the culture of the party at all levels. The next leader needs to use their privileged position to expose the racists in its ranks.

All of this requires leadership that has been lacking from Corbyn, who was either never exposed to the true depths of the problem, or didn't believe it. The next leader will have a small window of opportunity and a period of goodwill from those who have raised concerns about this issue. But they will want to see swift and uncompromising action.

Tackling anti-Semitism and hard left conspiracy hobby horses could be a defining and transformative moment for the next leader. If they can demonstrate the strength of their values by standing up to the bigots in the party, then maybe the country will see something they are interested in voting for. Ah, there goes my optimism again....

Alastair Campbell

Editor-at-Large

1917. No words.

No words in the title. No words good enough to describe what an extraordinary film it is.

Agreed, this is an entirely subjective view. That it is widely shared, however, was clear as the audience filed out in near total silence, lost in thought at what the film provokes in us, and wonder at the cinematographic masterpiece we had just seen.

Out in the foyer, I bumped into a young man I had chatted to on the way in. We stared at each other, shook our heads, then finally he said: "You need a few minutes to let it all sink in after that, don't you?" You do. You really do. In fact, delete 'minutes,' insert 'days'.

The cinema was packed – we got the last available seats – and it was the third one we had tried, our two usual cinemas having sold out. *1917*. Something is going on here.

But what? It can't just be the historical setting of the First World War, which many film-makers have used before Sam Mendes. Nor can it merely be the fairly simple story – a Lance Corporal sent with a colleague through no man's land and old enemy lines to get a message to another British regiment to warn they

Finding hope in an unlikely place

EPIC: George MacKay in Sam Mendes' First World War drama *1917*

Photo: Contributed

are being lured into an ambush by the Germans, with the young man's older brother among those facing almost certain death unless the message gets through.

It can partly be explained by the epic ambitiousness of the production, the film appearing to be one continuous shot following the two young men on their perilous journey.

From the start, as Lance Corporals Schofield and Blake make their way down the trenches to receive their orders, there are moments when, amid your following of the action, you sit there marvelling at how close to it you feel, how much detail is contained in the background, how much work must have gone in to every scene, every second. Epic.

The music is extraordinary. The script and the acting are superb, and though there are some A-listers in the cast, such as Colin Firth and Benedict Cumberbatch, they have minor roles compared with the lesser known George MacKay and Dean-Charles Chapman, who are brilliant.

But a film can only have the impact this one is clearly having if it speaks, whatever the historical setting, to the world we are in today.

There might be exceptions, when we visit history in the cinema as a means of escapism, just as we might do with comedy, musicals or science fiction, but *1917* is no escapist movie. It is too gruelling, too realistic, at times too heart-breaking, for that.

As my partner Fiona and I chatted about it afterwards, once we had got through all the different 'wow' factors, and I had posted a tweet which contained 'amazing' no fewer than nine times – no words! – we tried to boil it down. What is it that makes this one of those films that will endure long beyond the cinema queues and the awards ceremonies?

My first shot was patriotism, of which support and admiration for our armed forces, past and present, is a part. Yet, you do not need to be British to get the most from the film – I suspect it will be a hit the world over – and it never strays into nationalism. Indeed, one of the most powerful scenes is of the two young men rescuing a German pilot from the wreckage of his shot-down plane, while the portrayal of the British officer class is not what you would call flattering.

Courage then, and heroism. Nearer the mark. From the moment the two Lance Corporals set off from their own trenches, there is risk, and so courage, in every step they take. That's the other question that keeps popping into your mind as you watch… would I be able to do that? Would my children? Would today's young generation, should the circumstances require it, be able to summon up the kind of courage and heroism that appear to come so easily to Schofield and Blake?

Might climate change, rather than a world war, be the issue that tests the question? Are Greta Thunberg and her fellow climate crisis activists providing part of the answer? I don't know, but I do know we are in desperate need of heroes.

So patriotism… a bit. Heroism… a lot. But Fiona had a different 'ism' that she felt explained why this was turning into a cultural and commercial hit… 'optimism'. That might seem odd given the grim harshness of the trenches, the horrible sights of death and suffering the two soldiers encounter as they strive to fulfil their mission, and the fear that shivers through the audience at several key moments.

There is a moment when Schofield runs into a platoon of British soldiers, who give him a lift in their lorry. He tells them of the mission he is on, and is confronted by the universal view that he won't make it. They in turn are confronted by his unshakeable belief that he will. I am sure I wasn't alone in having a sense of Barack Obama's "Yes we can" enter my mind.

So optimism. Yes, maybe that's it, the force of it enhanced by the near dystopian landscape in which this absolute determination is playing out. How can it be that you leave a film with so much to upset you that nonetheless has you feeling uplifted, hopeful?

Yes we can. People need optimism. It is as much a part of the human condition as all of the bad parts which seem to be so prominently on display among so many of those who dominate the national and global conversation. Donald Trump – bad… so bad… so, so bad. So how did he win? With an optimistic message… "Make America Great Again". How did Boris Johnson win here, when as with Trump, people sensed badness, narcissism, a lack of concern for the truth? He had energy, and optimism. He talked the country up, not down. He spoke to optimism. There were large doses of bulls**t attached to all of it, but faced with the miserabilism that defined so much of Labour's message at the last election, it worked.

I don't imagine the Labour leadership contenders have too much time for the cinema right now. But a visit to *1917*, and a bit of reflection as to why it is saying something so powerful to so many people, would be worth their while.

They might find there are four takeaways that could help their campaigns and, if they win, their leadership.

One – patriotism matters, and even better if it can be defined and defended against nationalism. For the truth is we Remainers allowed the Brexiteers far too easily to claim patriotism as their own. And Jeremy Corbyn made the same mistake against Johnson.

Two – courage matters, and the courage required of Labour's would-be leaders right now demands a proper assessment of the scale of the challenge, and a set of ideas worthy and capable of meeting it. That leads to lesson three, from Sam Mendes… think big not small.

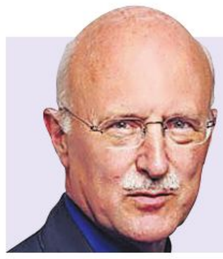
Four – and most importantly – give grounds for hope. Yes, spell out how bad things are under the Tories, but show the better way. Don't just moan. Don't just gripe. Don't just say it is all their fault. Set a big goal and inspire people to believe you can reach it.

That is, whether we like it or not, what Johnson did, and yes, he can now be held to account over whether what he delivers matches up to what he promised to get elected. But do not underestimate, even if things go wrong for him, how much people prefer to hear a story of hope, than a constant analysis of failure.

And now, if you are yet to see it, I strongly recommend you find a cinema showing *1917*, and book a ticket.

AGENDA

Ding dong days are gone?



MICHAEL WHITE ON THE QUIET PASSING OF THE BREXIT BILL AND NOISY RETURN OF REALITY

How is the new parliament settling down? It met for four days before Christmas and, back since January 7, is now into double figures. What's the mood and what are the new MPs like? More to the point here, whatever happened to the European Union (Withdrawal Agreement) Bill, the one which caused so much grief in 2019? You may have wondered during recent days of headline-grabbing distractions at home and abroad.

I wondered too, as I scoured for tantalising glimpses of it on the inside pages and towards the back end of news bulletins. Well, after three failed attempts during the fast-receding May era and one aborted success under the First Johnson Junta, it passed all its Commons stages with indecent speed as soon as the Second Junta parliament returned from the festive break. It even got its second reading in the Lords this Monday, not that you'd have noticed from Tuesday's papers.

Funny, isn't it, how public attention can so quickly move on. In fairness to voters and the media pack, there has been much to divert our attention. The assassination of Iran's war-fighting General Soleimani was more than enough. But it was quickly followed by Tehran's token revenge raid and the self-inflicted disaster of the vicious Revolutionary Guard's downing of Flight 752 to Kiev. As we and many Iranians immediately spotted, that in turn was compounded by the catastrophic attempt by the mullahs' regime to deny blame, the classic cover-up error. Wow!

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Yet even that significant world event – its consequences far from over, whatever soothing reassurances either side gives us – was overshadowed in Not-So-Global-Britain by the latest divorce to shake the Royal Family. Not one for this column, though a useful reminder of how fragile institutions can be in emotionally impulsive times. To weather the storm this one depends heavily on the steady reputation of a 93-year-old monarch, so much solider than the World King across St James's Park in Downing St. Wow again.

In more staid times, the patching up of the Sinn Fein/DUP feud which has disgracefully paralysed Stormont during three tumultuous Brexit years would deserve a bigger cheer than it got. It shows that Dublin and London can still work together when they have to but also that No.10 might not be so eager to get out Boris's cheque book – the region's health service is in worse trouble than most – as it was when it depended on Arlene Foster's votes. It was all smiles when the PM visited Belfast, but he was characteristically evasive on the cash. Brisk but vague, full of flowery literary allusion, was also the tone at his first victor's PMQs.

And no wonder. The UK economy grew by a paltry 0.1% in the three months to December 1 and Christmas retail and other indicators have not been bright since. Yes, there are upticks – employment still buoyant – but Sajid Javid is being required to deliver a zeitgeist miracle for the "decade of renewal" on March 11 while not falling too deeply into debt. The chancellor's mission to rebalance tax and spending priorities has already been knocked off course by calls for a hand-out at stricken Flybe, Europe's largest regional carrier. As former transport secretary, Andrew Adonis, was quick to point out, slashing airport taxes across the board is both expensive and un-green. Welcome to government, Saj. And, by the way, hapless Northern Rail and South Western Railway are fast falling into your lap too. Brussels' restrictions on state aid still apply, old chap.

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Meanwhile, Conservative MPs who gave the Withdrawal Bill a thumping 358 to 234-vote majority on December 20 are in optimistic mood. Enthusiastically so on the now-dominant Brexit wing of the party, more cautiously among ex-Remainers who put their hands up to help make the best of it, as so many were doing in the last parliament without getting much credit from either camp. And Labour? Well, Manchester's Graham Stringer reported that he is the only pro-Brexit Labour MP left after like-minded colleagues were either defeated on December 12 or retired. It did not stop six colleagues voting with the majority in deference to local voters while he abstained because he thinks there's a better deal to be had. He always does.

Having cantered through the second and third reading debates and much of the two-day (only!!) only committee stages in online Hansard, I kept reading that the mood of the Commons chamber is much improved. That's partly down to the election of Lancashire Labour's Sir Lindsay Hoyle as speaker, a more emollient figure than John Bercow. Speaker B had his good points, but a talent for conciliation or self-effacement were not among them. Hoyle will lower the temperature without – I hope – becoming a government capture, as some speakers have been.

But is the mood less partisan when diehards on both sides – Bill Cash, John Hayes and Owen ("day of celebration") Paterson for Brexit, Green Caroline Lucas, the SNP's Joanna Cherry QC and Labour's Chris Bryant against – dominated the debate? Only a handful of new MPs dared make their maiden speeches – good ones too – and speaker Hoyle prevented them from doing so during the committee stage because it would take too much time. Convention forbids colleagues interrupting newbies.

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Certainly, Paul Blomfield, Labour's junior Brexit spokesman and Sheffield Central's MP since 2010 – so a veteran by modern turnover standards – detected a "subdued mood" on the government side during the third reading debate on Friday. He suspected "the dawning realisation that they may find it hard to deliver on the high expectations they have created" since 2016. DExEU chief, Stephen Barclay and his understrapper, James Duddridge – who will definitely lose their current jobs when their department folds on January 31 – echoed Boris's own appeal (no longer "Montagues or Capulets") to come together and seize opportunities now opening up.

That's fine, replied the excellent Blomfield during the detailed committee stage. But your revised Withdrawal Bill tells another story. Conspicuously, MPs are stripped of the veto provided by the Benn/Cooper amendment. Specifically, Clause 33 makes illegal a further extension of the negotiating transition beyond December, as Ursula von der Leyen, Michel Barnier and Team Brussels all insist will be likely. Unless Johnson really wants the "no deal trap door" it's only a gimmick which can be repealed, Blomfield reminded colleagues.

Secondly, ministerial promises to the three million EU citizens living in Britain look fragile without further protection from the Windrush treatment. Only 40% of the 2.8 million who have applied for settled status have been granted it, most have only pre-settled status because they do not have or cannot prove five years of residence here. The Independent Monitoring Authority is not – and does not inspire confidence.

Peers are pressing hard on this one, as they are – thanks to *kindertransport* veteran, Lord Alf Dubs's tenacious work – on the status on unaccompanied children seeking asylum in the UK, a highly emotive subject and Blomfield's third bullet point. But unlike the settled status issue, opposition MPs did not get it all their own way. David Simmonds, new Tory MP for Ruislip, in Hillingdon, where he was a longstanding councillor, happens to have had major national responsibility for local authority handling of asylum seekers, especially children, whose unaccompanied numbers have doubled. Beware traffickers who send them in dinghies or lorries to establish a "family reunion route" into Britain for families safe in EU camps, he said.

Food for thought, as are Blomfield's fourth and fifth worries, made on behalf of his boss, Keir Starmer, who is busy elsewhere polishing his leadership frontrunner's campaign. They were – no surprise – the Northern Irish protocol (ie backstop) which erects a barrier down the Irish Sea for goods entering mainland Britain (it alarmed all Stormont parties); and concern for the future trade and security deal with the EU27 which Tory loyalists breezily insist can be done by Christmas. As Stephen Kinnock best put it, not for the first time, a 52:48% referendum result is "a mandate to move house, but to stay in the same neighbourhood".

That's currently not likely to happen as the two sides edge towards negotiations in March. In cake-and-eat-it mode, Johnson insists that he wants a tariff- and quota-free deal covering goods, services and other areas of cooperation (presumably including the sensitive European Arrest Warrant and Erasmus scholarships), but the right to diverge on regulations and standards. Some of ours will be higher, he reportedly told the Commission president on her visit to No.10. That's another opposition worry at Westminster, of course. Do they trust "Get Brexit Done" Boris in a hurry and in hock to rich backers?

To the particular alarm of the SNP and Plaid Cymru, Clause 4 grants the UK government a 'power grab' to handle repatriated authority over devolved matters, at least for now. Ministers promise separate legislation in the year ahead to protect environmental standards and workers rights which they have deleted from the first draft of the bill. Critics are entitled to be wary of Johnson promises, but none of the 100 combined opposition's amendments – none designed to thwart Brexit – were accepted. As for von der Leyen, she and Barnier insist they want a regulatory "level playing field". They also want the fishing rights issue dealt with first – which No.10 won't concede, since it is one of Brexit Britain's stronger cards. The EU's Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) has not been its finest hour.

But Brussels doctrine is not necessarily right on other matters either. As the trade talk stances surface from both sides we will hear more about the EU's insistence on regulatory harmonisation and about London's ambition to substitute the more flexible formula of outcome-based equivalence, regulatory divergence thereby achieving the same level of standards by other means. It is the approach adopted by the world's other major trading block, so

Liam (remember him?) Fox points out, the US and China. EU harmonisation is the minority position.

UK trade with the EU grew by 1.3% last year, with the rest of the world by 6.3%, chips in Owen Paterson. More food for thought, along with those symbolic, chlorinated American chickens. Tiverton farmers' MP, Neil Parish, told colleagues that the real US chicken problem is overuse of antibiotics to fatten birds quickly, not the chlorine wash. He also thinks we can devise a better agricultural policy for our own needs than one for 28 states which has harmed UK farming.

Hmmm. I think we can detect some rethinking going on as Brexit Day looms. In his *FT* Monday column, German business pundit Wolfgang Munchau notes that the Bank of England's Mark Carney is now talking up the opportunities for the City which may outweigh the costs of regulatory divergence – quite different from his and the City's earlier demand for full passporting rights for the mighty financial services sector to trade from anywhere to anywhere. Most big firms have set up inside the 27, just as Common Sense Mogg's asset management fund did in Dublin.

Both sides made mistakes in earlier negotiations, mostly to Brussels' advantage. But both have more to lose in this year's talks. The EU will defend its single market, at a cost to itself if needs be, even if it means German luxury carmakers having to import its US-made products to Britain at the expense of its German employees in the event of a minimal 'skinny trade deal'. Ditto Britain, which has more to lose but also more to gain if its gamble even half-works. That's always been a nagging fear in Berlin and Paris. I'm sceptical, but let's see what happens. For better and worse, Boris Johnson owns the Brexit project now. On Tuesday's BBC *Breakfast*'s soft sofa shifty Boris shifted from an "absolute zero" chance of a no-deal by December to a deal being "epically likely". So we're back to uncertainty already. But it's his call.

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As Rhondda's Chris Bryant put it: "As much as I am a Remainer, I remain a Remainer and will remain a Remainer until my dying day. Nonetheless I accept that a second referendum has now happened. That is the end of it." It's not quite the end. Opposition peers know as well as MPs did – and said – that more people voted for Remain (or second referendum) parties than for Brexit-supporting ones on December 12. They are promising to press the government on sensitive points and have the votes to carry the day. But unelected lords always know they must respect election results and will move very warily, aware that Team Boris has threatened their very existence more subtly than Rebecca Long-Bailey's campaign pledge to abolish them.

In the weeks ahead, both houses should concentrate some of their energy on making sure that Johnson's minders don't get away with avoiding accountability, either to them or to voters via the media. New select committees may not be functioning until Easter. Key ministers have managed to duck such forums since they were appointed on July 24. They are being kept off BBC's *Newsnight* and *Today* programmes. Mendacious Donald Trump's White House hasn't briefed the sceptical media for six months. Johnson was a cynical journalist who became a cynical politician, cynical about both callings. Soft interviews on sofa TV and soft messages on social media just won't do for long in a democracy. One or the other has to give ground.

No change for climate cause

Will former Remain campaigners now switch their attention to climate change activism? Green Party MEP CATHERINE ROWETT thinks not

Many of us who have spent the last few years fighting an increasingly desperate campaign for Remain are now struggling to find our feet in a new context where 'remaining' is no longer on the cards, rejoining is unlikely to be a realistic project for some time and just being bitter about it all is not enough.

One suggested answer I have heard to the 'what next?' question we have all been asking is that we might see all that energy, organisation and activism that has hitherto been poured into battling to stay in the EU now being redirected into the campaign for meaningful action to tackle climate change.

Certainly, there is often an overlap between opposition to Brexit and concern about climate change – just as there is often (though not always) a correlation between those wanting to sever our ties with the EU and climate change deniers.

So will we start to see the hundreds of thousands who previously marched against Brexit coming out in similar numbers to demand serious climate action and ambitious decarbonisation targets?

For my part, I think not, for several reasons. Firstly, the Remain movement was a broad coalition. Not all parts were the same. Just as there were two diametrically opposed kinds of Leavers (those for whom the EU was too neo-liberal, too devoted to free trade and economic austerity, and those for whom it was too socialist, too redistributive, with social and environmental regulations that stood in the way of their free market goals), so there were two radically different types of Remainers.

There were those for whom the EU is primarily a collaborative body, providing the natural setting for securing human rights, workers' rights, animal welfare and environmental regulations, across a level playing field that prevents private profit being extracted at the expense of the good of the collective. Those of us in this camp fought to stay in the EU in the hope of moving it further in that direction, with a view to critical reform to improve but not remove the regulations.

And then there were those Remainers for whom the EU is primarily a trading bloc, occupying a powerful position *vis-à-vis* other major trading partners. These Remainers hoped to stay in the EU for its economic advantages, to be part of a free market neo-liberal trade alliance. So their criterion of success was a strong economy and a 'good' balance of trade, where 'good' meant that the bottom line showed a profit. Their natural mode of discourse tended to be about ensuring that industry and commerce remained 'competitive' – to which end, regulation must be minimal.

The kind of Remainer in this second camp is more likely to find themselves inside the building being targeted by Extinction Rebellion than outside glueing themselves to the door.

Such neo-liberal, globalising Remainers are not going to be leading the way in seeking more regulations at home with the aim of achieving genuine and dramatic carbon reductions or a zero-growth economy. But what about those former Remainers who do align more closely to the climate cause and would like to have found more time for environmental action but, since 2016, have been pre-occupied with stopping Brexit? Can we assume that all of that energy will now be available for climate action?

Probably not, because such an assumption would mean accepting Boris Johnson's premise that he has effectively 'got Brexit done'. The election result does not mean that the repercussions and the threat that Brexit poses are simply going to vanish, allowing us all to relax and go back to hugging trees. Not a bit of it. Activism will remain focused on this and related issues.

North of the border, it will clearly be diverted first to the campaign for Scottish independence and then for rejoining the EU. I do not imagine that either of those will be easy to achieve. In Northern Ireland there will be a new political crisis and we can expect moves towards a referendum on reunification, plus the threat of a new period of escalating sectarian violence. This too will be an all-consuming diversion from more global issues. In the rest of the UK we shall have to respond to both these crises with an attempt to keep our nations united in hard times under a government that has no clue about what kind of pandora's box it has just opened.

And then there will be the divisions in the Labour Party. Will Brexit put an end to Labour's difficulties, which stem from its failure to convert the hearts of the old Labour faithful in the north to embrace a European identity? Will the party be able to move forward in unity, now that it no longer has to juggle two quite different outlooks and pretend they can be fitted under one manifesto? I suspect not. The

GREEN AGENDA: Extinction Rebellion climate change activists lie on the floor as they perform a mass "die in" in the Natural History Museum in London

Photo: Getty Images

Brexit division was surely only one among many issues that expose the mismatch between the outlook of the typical young Labour-voting graduate in London and that of a worker in a unionised industry in the north. So political divisions, and activism, will continue to play out on the left.

And we will also see a rise in the campaign to change the voting system, which has once again produced a government at odds with the majority of its people, and one which is about to make dramatic constitutional changes.

So besides protesting day by day at whatever horrifying new policies and legislation may be emerging from the Brexit process, there will also have to be a vigorous campaign on the streets to try to achieve voting reform.

And on the streets is effectively where every campaign will have to be, because while the government has a huge majority of seats and operates an unscrupulous whip, there will be no scope within Westminster to stop the legislative programme, no matter how unpopular it is.

And then there is the situation in the Middle East, the evident reluctance of our government to distance the UK from the bellicose Trump, and hence the threat that we could find ourselves in 'Stop the War' protest season again before too long.

So shall we find that all the pro-Europe activism is now diverted to green activism? No.

If we ever supposed that once Brexit was 'done' the only issue distracting us from saving the planet will have gone away for good, we shall soon discover how very wrong we were.

■ Catherine Rowett was elected as a Green Party MEP for the East of England last year

Values cannot be defeated

Following last week's special issue on what happens next to the Remain movement, youth activist AMANDA CHETWYND-COWIESON gives her view

The word 'lost' has always struck me as a strange one to describe defeat. Lost means we are meant to let go of something in our possession, so we can still find it again. In the campaign for a final say referendum and, ultimately, to stay in the EU, we were aspiring to more than just hold on to the status quo.

The movement for staying close to Europe wouldn't have ended once we had won a final say, and it won't end because the election didn't go our way. Because, in many ways, our movement was a vessel for the values we believed in so strongly – values weren't covered adequately by any other tent large enough to hold all the disparate groups ours did. It was these values that led us to set up For our Future's Sake – not, crucially, the other way around.

We were defined more by the values we stood for, rather than what we fight against; and this means our defeat, although it truly is a defeat, will not destroy us.

Values like openness, accountability, diversity, representation: to our opponents, these are simply buzzwords or boxes to be ticked if you want to have credibly 'engaged the youth vote'. But for us they will define the next decade of politics, and whether we can rise to face the serious challenges ahead.

We can only overcome them together. Going forward, all self-proclaimed 'progressive campaigns' must critically examine how representative and diverse their leadership and internal structures are. The parliamentary Labour Party is making headway: just over half of their MPs are women, and one in five are from a minority ethnic background. They will take a dim view of movements dominated by the male, pale and stale – especially if activists are merely touted as evidence of their inclusivity.

We knew this in our fight against Brexit. It was why we didn't host all-male panels or all-white panels; why we insisted working-class voices were given an equal platform, why we over-whelmingly campaigned outside London.

> **"Be unapologetic for your beliefs. Be willing to compromise, to change your mind – but remember it's still right, as it was two or 10 years ago, to be pro-Europe**

Yes, we didn't succeed. But that doesn't lessen our achievements – record levels of youth voter registration, successive governments held to account by young people like never before; more school, college and university visits from MPs discussing Brexit than almost any other issue. And, for once, a campaign that both did humorous stunts and wasn't afraid to challenge its friends as much as its foes.

What we do have now is time. Time to think, communicate and organise. We should use it properly. Rushing unprepared into a fight where we're already on the backfoot is terrible strategy especially when there are questions that need to be answered.

First and foremost: why are young people consistently marginalised in politics? A YouGov poll suggests younger generations are more likely to feel as if their vote doesn't matter. This, at least, is easy to explain. Young people are more likely to vote Labour, and a recent report from the Electoral Reform Society on the election showed that on average it took just 38,264 votes to elect a Conservative MP and 50,835 to elect a Labour one – casting the slogan "for the many, not the few" into a new light. But this doesn't explain why MPs tend to be far older than the average age in the UK, the relative scarcity of young voices in media, or why issues young people care deeply about are given lip service rather than the attention they deserve. Just saying the words "it's important for young people to be engaged in our democracy" isn't enough – you have to take meaningful and sustained action, because the lives of most young people are not very glamorous.

The fights ahead will not be glamorous either. Just as evil can be banal, doing good is often mundane. Join your trade union, encourage young people to register to vote outside of the general election rush, supporting movements such as schoolstrike4climate, having difficult conversations with those you hold dear about the country you want to live in; these are the things that will make the most difference if enough people do them.

But above all: be unapologetic for your beliefs. Be willing to compromise, to change your mind – but remember it's still right, as it was two or 10 years ago, to be pro-Europe.

Our reasons haven't simply disappeared: they include the EU funding my college received, the friends I made at university who came to study here, the workers' rights protections I had after leaving university – these things will always be true, even after we leave at the end of the month.

The only thing we really stand to lose is our history. If we let those with temporary power rewrite it through our forgetting, then our defeat will be both absolute and inevitable. Keep it close, and keep each other close too. We will make it through this.

■ Amanda Chetwynd-Cowieson is co-founder of For our Future's Sake and chairwoman of the British Youth Council

Trump cannot rely on protests to solve crisis

The anti-government protests which have erupted in Iran have deflected attention from the US president's missteps, says former diplomat PAUL KNOTT

Foreign policy is a pragmatic, often rough, business. The question that matters most when analysing it is 'did the action taken advance the national interest?' In the case of Donald Trump's Iran policy and decision to assassinate the commander of Iran's Revolutionary Guard 'Al Quds' force, Major General Qasem Soleimani, the long-term answer is likely to be a resounding 'no'.

Soleimani was the key figure in arming, training and directing a series of Iranian-proxy militia forces around the Middle East, including Hezbollah in Lebanon and Kata'ib Hezbollah in Iraq. He was responsible for the deaths of hundreds of Americans. As such, it is difficult to argue that his killing cannot be justified.

The more important consideration is whether Trump's actions were wise, in terms of enhancing international security and advancing American interests.

Clearly, bringing the world's only superpower to the brink of war with a pivotal state such as Iran does not advance global stability. Previous US administrations could have eliminated Soleimani but chose not to do so because the risk of causing a bigger conflict far outweighed the benefits of killing him.

While Soleimani was a capable, charismatic and increasingly prominent leader, he stood atop a robust military infrastructure which survives his passing and contains other officers who may be able to adopt his mantle.

Nor is it likely that Iran's response to Soleimani's killing will end with the missile attack it carried out on the American's Al-Assad military base in Iraq four days later. Remarkably, this incident was practically choreographed in an exchange of notes passed between Washington and Tehran via the Swiss ambassador in Iran (who represents US interests there in the absence of an American embassy).

It enabled Iran to provide a show of fire and fury for TV viewers back home whilst deliberately avoiding causing any casualties that would have compelled the US to respond in kind.

The Iranians were never likely to hurtle into a head-on military conflict with the much more powerful Americans. The Islamic Republic's record suggests that they will be patient and less direct in seeking their real vengeance.

Significantly, the head of the Iranian-backed militias in Iraq, Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, was killed alongside Soleimani in the American drone attack in Baghdad. Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, made disturbing reference to this in his speech after his country's official rocket barrage when he said that it was now the Iraqi militias' turn to tackle the Americans.

Iran's associated militias have frequently carried out hostage-taking and acts of terrorism both in and beyond the Middle East.

The likelihood that they will attack an American target, or one of its allies, during the coming months is now high. This could take the form of an assassination attempt against a senior official or broader action against a US military facility or embassy. Less likely but also possible is an attack against a prominent commercial target, such as shipping in the Persian Gulf or even a Trump-branded building.

Tehran's calculation in prompting such an attack will be that it will be perceived as their revenge while being deniable enough to avoid an automatic American military response and outright warfare. Relying on the impetuous US president seeing it that way is not a comforting thought for the rest of us.

As the tension in the Iran-US relationship continues to build, there are plenty of other potential flashpoints too.

Iran will use its extensive political and military influence in Iraq and Syria to redouble its efforts to push the remaining US forces out of those countries, where their primary recent role has been to help prevent ISIS from resurging. Ostensibly, this campaign coincides with Trump's own promise to remove US forces from the Middle East. It does, though, clash with the reality of him currently sending more troops to the region and his obsession with playing the strongman.

The humiliation of the US being forced out at the barrel of an Iranian-supplied gun would not sit well with him in this re-election year.

President Trump's erratic nature and incoherent Middle East strategy make it difficult to discern his wider objectives on Iran. But Trump has stated that these include preventing Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon and reducing Iranian meddling around the Middle East. Deposing Iran's Islamic Republic regime or negotiating a deal with it that renders it subservient to American diktat also seem to be on the list.

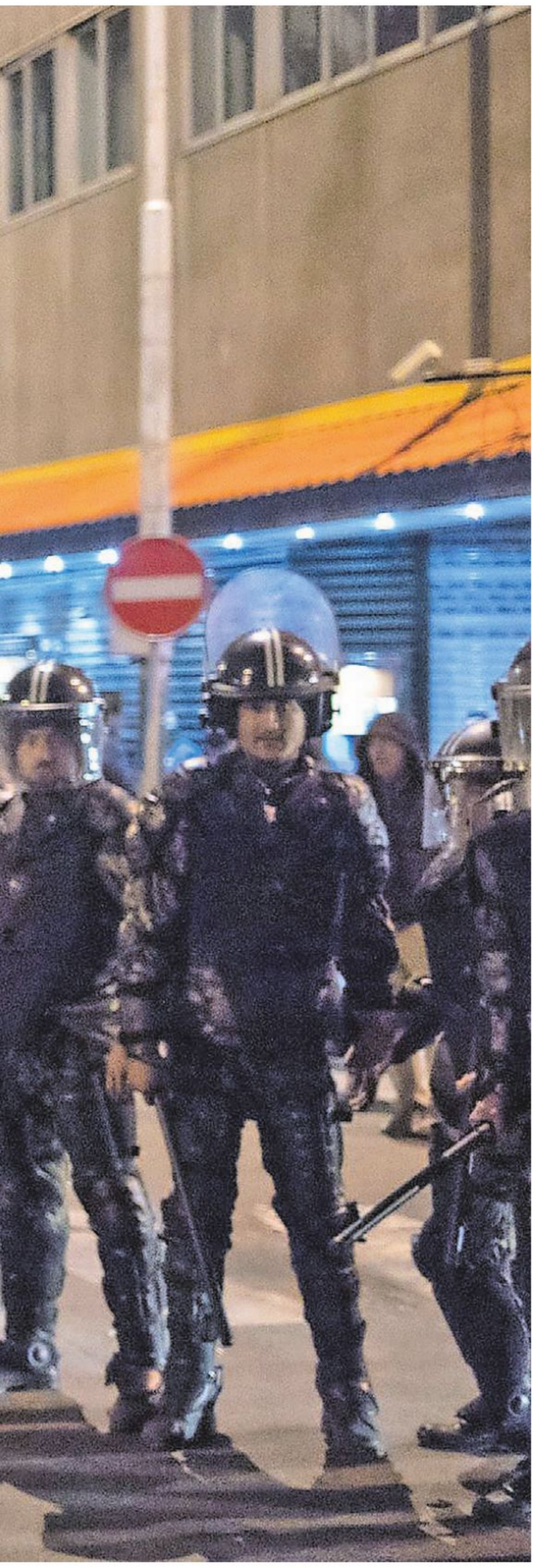
Trump's policy on the nuclear issue is already an ever-worsening failure. When taking office in January 2017, he inherited the JCPOA nuclear deal between Iran, the US and six other global powers.

The deal halted Iran's nuclear weapons programme for at least ten years and included the most stringent international inspections regime ever implemented. The agreement was working and every signatory (plus the US intelligence agencies) endorsed the inspectors' assessments that Iran was complying with it.

Trump's decision in May 2018 to withdraw from the deal prompted Iran to

FALSE HOPE: An Iranian woman holds a placard reading in Farsi "Your mistake was unintentional, your lie was intentional" during a demonstration outside Tehran's Amir Kabir University

Photos: Getty Images



take some modest steps to reduce its compliance with it. Now, the killing of Soleimani (who opposed the deal because he thought, correctly it turns out, that the US could not be trusted to stick to it) has led to Tehran abandoning the crucial restrictions on uranium enrichment imposed by the agreement.

It is difficult in these circumstances of deep mistrust to see how the deal could be renegotiated while Trump is in office and we are now rapidly returning to the terrifying pre-deal options. One of these is to allow Iran to become an atomic weapons state soon – at the time the JCPOA was signed, Iran had enough enriched material for eight to ten nuclear bombs and was just two to three months away from being able to build one.

This would probably trigger a nuclear arms race in the world's most unstable region, as rivals such as Saudi Arabia scramble to match Iran.

The other option is to bomb Iran's nuclear facilities. Apart from the obvious danger that this would start a full-blown war, the chances of such military action succeeding are low. Damaging nuclear installations might delay the progress of Iran's programme. But scientific knowledge cannot be bombed out of existence and the programme would be quickly revived.

Some of Trump's senior officials seem to be pinning their expectations of avoiding war on the Iranian people overthrowing their government.

American conservatives have been predicting a successful uprising against the Islamic Republic almost since it was founded after the 1979 Iranian revolution.

One day they might be right because the Iranian regime is, in many respects, an odious one under which to live and unpopular with many of its people.

Tough US sanctions and government mismanagement are causing great economic hardship for many Iranians. And the mistaken but reckless shooting down of the Ukrainian airliner last week, killing 176 people, mostly Iranians or of Iranian origin, has prompted further public fury at the authorities.

Much of the anger at officialdom for their initial lies about the downing of the Ukrainian plane has been targeted at the Revolutionary Guard, who were responsible. Conversely, this might actually prompt a more robust and rapid backlash by the Guards against the US, as they seek to restore their reputation as fearsome defenders of the republic.

In any case, the regime still enjoys strong support amongst some sectors of society. This backing tends to intensify whenever Western pressure revives Iranian perceptions of historical interference in their affairs – as was demonstrated recently by the massive turnout for Soleimani's funeral procession.

The regime has also repeatedly proven ruthless in overcoming previous waves of protest. It would be unwise to bet too heavily on a different outcome this time. Even if the regime does collapse under public pressure, it is far from certain that its successor would be one that makes Iran any easier to handle.

As the man who successfully concluded the Iran nuclear deal, former US secretary of state John Kerry said, when Trump took office Iran was complying with an agreement which prevented it from having a nuclear weapon; America's allies were united alongside it; no ships were being sabotaged in the Persian Gulf; there were no missile attacks on US facilities; no protestors were breaching the American embassy in Baghdad and US and Iraqi forces were successfully fighting ISIS together.

That is not to say that the relationship with Iran was great or that Iran was not engaging in deeply troubling activities, such as abusing human rights and developing ballistic missiles at home whilst fomenting conflict in Yemen, propping up the Assad regime in Syria and threatening Israel. But a diplomatic platform had been laid to begin tackling those issues too.

Since entering the White House, Trump's every move on Iran has undermined this progress and made a difficult, tense situation worse, to the point where all out war is a grave possibility. That is a foreign policy failure on a potentially catastrophic scale.

JAMES BALL'S DECONSTRUCTED

EU must up game to be world player

The new decade has started with one of the stupidest and most dangerous escalations in history, thanks to – at least in the short-term – the short fuse of President Donald J. Trump and his continued presence on Twitter.

There's a sizeable chance the series of tit-for-tat escalations between the US and Iran were set off by exchanges on the site between @realdonaldtrump and @khamenei_ir, the account operated in the name of Iran's Ayatollah Khamenei, which threw down the gauntlet to a US president determined never to lose face.

But if the short-run version of the causes of an escalation which could ripple across the Middle East for years and devastate thousands or millions of lives is a miscalculation by Iran of the president's temperament – or the ability of those around him to rein him in – the longer-term miscalculation may lie with the European Union.

The EU was instrumental in delivering the Iran nuclear deal, which has finally been declared dead after months on life support.

The deal – almost unanimously hailed as a huge diplomatic breakthrough when it was made – included the EU, US, Russia, China and Iran as signatories, and was based solely on containing and curtailing the country's nuclear programme, in exchange for relief on sanctions.

The biggest problem with the deal, which was brokered extensively by the EU and which may represent the only significant foreign policy achievement in the bloc's history, was that its US signatory was Barack Obama – and anything agreed by the former US president was clearly going to be condemned by his successor.

What has followed has all come from Trump's decision to withdraw the US from the Iran deal in 2018, but it's worth questioning whether things could have gone differently.

Faced with Trump's disdain and withdrawal from the arrangement, the EU response seemed to largely involve the head-in-a-sand approach, desperately trying to hold the deal together, despite every seasoned diplomat knowing this effort was doomed.

The credit for making the deal is well-deserved by the EU, but it's hard to applaud its efforts in trying to hold it together. Denial does not a foreign policy make.

> **Someone needs to be the grown-up in the room, and the USA is certainly no longer fulfilling that role.**

What else could it have done? One answer comes from an astonishingly unlikely source – UK prime minister Boris Johnson, usually known for gaffes and failures on the world stage. In an interview on Tuesday morning, he noted that the way forward for de-escalation with Iran may be for a deal with Donald Trump's, rather than Barack Obama's, name on it.

For once, Johnson might be right. In 2018, the US president announced he was going to withdraw the US from the NAFTA bloc – its trade deal with Canada and Mexico.

Rather than adopt the EU's denial approach, negotiators set out to agree an apparently completely new deal – USMCA – which to any onlooker except Trump looks almost identical to NAFTA, albeit with a few small concessions. With a new deal he could claim as his own, Trump was back on board and championing his foreign policy victory.

It is not hard to imagine that with such an effort a similar salvage operation could have been done to create a 'new' Iran deal.

The sad thing is that EU's foreign policy arm – blinded by its distaste for the man in the White House – didn't even try to mitigate the harm he could do.

Foreign policy usually involves getting down and dirty. If there was any potential of salvaging a major win – a deal which kept the world safer from nuclear proliferation – simply by flattering a narcissist's ego, the EU should have seized upon it. Someone needs to be the grown-up in the room, and the USA is certainly no longer fulfilling that role.

In practice, though, the EU's ambition towards broader foreign policy outside of its formidable reputation on trade, seems futile if not doomed. Its only victory, the Iran deal, lies in tatters. There are few other likely successes coming in the pipeline.

Foreign policy, too, is one area where the EU certainly is damaged by Brexit. It has lost one of the countries with the most experienced diplomatic service and effective militaries, one of its two nuclear powers and one of its two seats on the UN Security Council.

If the EU wants to start being a force on the world stage – and it is clear that it does – it will have to accept its current position punches below its weight.

That requires an organisation to box clever, not slowly and clunkily, and only on its own terms.

If avoiding conflict requires a new grown-up in the world, the EU is a good candidate for the job – but only if it ups its game, and fast.

Tortoise

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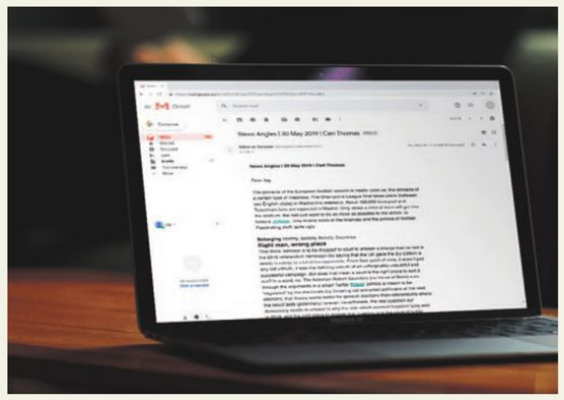

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Audio boom..

How the rise of podcasts revolutionised storytelling

Technology has led to a golden era for audio drama as RICHARD BROOKS explains

The state of audio drama in 2020 is wildly different from 10 years ago when audio, or rather radio drama, was in decline across much of the English-speaking world. Drama had been dropped from radio stations in the US, was being phased out from popular listening in Canada and faced budget cuts in the UK and Ireland.

The roots of the reinvention go back to the early 1980s. Adaptations like the BBC's *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, *Lord of the Rings* and NPR/BBC's *Star Wars* changed how radio drama was viewed. They gave rise to a later audio movie style and inspired a new generation of independents. These 'indie' producers pioneered the revival of the medium.

Digitisation of sound-design during the 1990s and 2000s put the means of production back into the hands of hobbyist creatives. However, getting shows to audiences was costly and difficult; that was until podcasting delivered stories direct to iPods in 2003.

When the drama showcase *Radio Drama Revival* was launched as a podcast in 2007, single-piece shows for CD, web or radio made up the majority of output; these were soon replaced by podcast serials that could reach a global audience.

Just as radio was cutting back in 2009, a range of new sci-fi podcast epics in the US, like the *Byron Chronicles*, *Edict Zero – FIS* and *We're Alive* took advantage of the new medium, enabling fans to binge listen on MP3 players.

Zombie drama *We're Alive* mirrored techniques from the earlier 'audio-movie' movement, with an emphasis on action and multilayered sound mixed for speakers. The more colloquial dialogue and episodic delivery paralleled trends in television, foreshadowing the later release of the hit show *The Walking Dead*. In the first year, downloads of *We're Alive* were in the hundreds; 10 years later they were in the hundreds of millions.

Up until 2012 new digital productions in the US often drew on audiences

BIG HIT: Jessica Biel in *Limetown*, a spin-off from the hugely successful podcast
Photo: IMDB

The increasing influence of 'WhatsApp

The messaging app has become a key tool of political campaigning, giving great power to those behind the scenes. ALIAKSANDR HERASIMENKA and ANASTASIA KAVADA report

Last year, when parliament asked the government to publish the messages that key officials were sending to each other about Brexit via text message, email, Facebook and messaging apps, it drew attention to the extent to which elected officials have been sidestepping official channels in their communications.

The push came in September, when tensions over Brexit were high and there were concerns that the government was being dishonest about its motives for suspending parliament for five weeks – a move that was ultimately ruled as unlawful by the Supreme Court.

Clearly parliamentarians thought important information was being shared on these platforms that the public needed to know about.

In a rather telling move, the government refused to comply with the request. The incident shows how messaging apps have come to play an important role in operations – and how they allow officials and politicians to evade scrutiny.

Political groups are increasingly alert to the potential of messaging services like WhatsApp and Telegram for operating closed communities.

The emergence of the European Research Group (ERG) within the UK Conservative Party is a case in point. This is an organisation for Conservative members of parliament who were enthusiastic about leaving the European Union long before the 2016 referendum and subsequently pushed for as hard a Brexit as possible.

Shortly after the referendum, key ERG leaders came together in a WhatsApp chat group. The then chairman of what was still a little-known organisation, Steve Baker, became an administrator of the group.

By the time the existence of the WhatsApp group was revealed four months later, the ERG was becoming more and more influential within the Conservative Party. Some would argue that its actions ultimately helped to thwart Theresa May's attempts to get her Brexit deal through parliament. The ERG voted again and again to block her deal, denying her the votes she needed.

This was quite an achievement for an organisation largely made up of backbenchers. At times, it isn't even entirely clear to the general public which parliamentarians are members of the ERG, yet they were able to exert significant influence over their party without having to go public with their operations.

That was, in no small, part, thanks to networks beyond the reach of traditional scrutiny mechanisms such as the WhatsApp group. The ERG WhatsApp group members described their chat as an "extremely effective" way of organising as it helped them to agree on "lines to take" in parliament and in the media.

CONTROL: European Research Group chairman Steve Baker
Photo: Getty Images

Many similar WhatsApp groups now exist in parliament. They unite MPs of different parties that range from Labour factions to the 'One Nation' group of moderate Tories. Communicating in a WhatsApp group even allows MPs to organise across party boundaries, helping them to defy the official party line on key issues.

This new type of political organising affects how power is distributed within parties and movements. A traditional party has a leader and a whip; a WhatsApp group has an administrator. A new breed of operative therefore wields significant power.

Administrators make decisions regarding who to add or remove from a chat and, often, what content is shared. This means that, if a group gets big enough, a relatively low-level party operative can become an important figure. In the traditional sense of party structures, Steve Baker, for example, is not a leading politician. But as administrator of the ERG WhatsApp group, he

familiar with the earlier radio tradition. However, this was fast changing. The bundling of the iTunes app on iPhones and growth of social media brought new listeners, who were discovering audio drama for the first time. The surreal comedy *Welcome to Night Vale* took advantage of this. Characterising itself as a radio news show, it appealed to an audience who knew the talk show format and grew rapidly through a fan following on Tumblr.

Equally, the global success of the investigative podcast *Serial* in 2014 created an appetite for true crime and fictional thrillers – such as *Limetown* and *Black Tapes* (2015). These latter intentionally blurred the boundaries of fiction and reality, making the listener a participant in the 'investigation'.

By 2016 podcast drama was growing quickly, prompting thought about how shows could be commercialised. Studio productions *The Message* and *The Discovery Adventure* drew on corporate sponsorships. Other companies looked at crossover appeal. In the UK, the Big Finish company had established a model of turning TV shows, like *Doctor Who* or *The Avengers*, into commercial audio dramas. In the US, podcasts like the thriller *Homecoming* and *Limetown* achieved the opposite by making the transition to television. While sci-fi shows *Steal the Stars* and *The Bright Sessions* have been turned into novelisations.

As a result, on-demand audiobook platforms, like Audible, took notice. By 2017 audiobooks were the fastest growing strand in publishing and today are recording yearly growth of 24%. As literature lovers started exchanging their Kindles for earbuds, Audible started expanding into a plethora of new models including hybrid audiobooks that combined narration and drama, audio "shows" (podcasts for subscribers) like *Aliens*, and original full-cast drama *Dark Water Bride*.

Despite continued belt-tightening, BBC Radio remains the biggest investor in audio fiction in the world, producing 300 dramas a year. Since 2010, it sought to compete with TV by producing eye-catching productions like *Neverwhere* starring Benedict Cumberbatch, the epic fantasy *Tumanbey* and the ambitious five-year reimagining of the First World War with *Home Front*.

In 2018, the corporation launched a digital audio platform BBC Sounds in a bid to take on the audio-giants with its portfolio of current affairs, music and drama. Eco-thriller, *Forest 404* exemplified this approach, combining talk, drama and music to capture a younger demographic.

The challenge will be for Sounds to represent the energy of the UK's own thriving podcast scene. The passionate fan commitment to productions like the comedy *Wooden Overcoats* was recently demonstrated when it overshot it's latest crowdfunding target by £10,000. Then there's the ever popular *My Dad Wrote a Porno*, which has developed into live iterations, a TV special and a bestselling book.

In a survey I conducted of 140 audio drama producers, of the 20 podcasts cited, *Hitchhiker's Guide* remains the most frequently stated source of inspiration. The oldest of the 20, it was a ground-breaking production. However, it is notable that over half of the podcasts mentioned are from the last 10 years.

The second and third most influential dramas were *Welcome to Night Vale* and *We're Alive*. This is a new industry still innovating and with new entrants creating inspiring and newly ground-breaking examples of audio fiction.

■ Richard Brooks is a research associate at the Centre for Business in Society, Coventry University; this article also appears at theconversation.com

group admin'

can control who is in and who is out of a discussion group that has played a central role in the direction taken on Brexit.

Research in recent social movements such as Occupy Wall Street and the *Indignados* anti-austerity group in Spain has shown that social media administrators can become leading voices in protest communities even when such movements are presented as 'leaderless' and 'horizontal'.

However, social movements are not the same as elected representatives. They do not have to conform to the same regulations around transparency and accountability that apply to our elected politicians.

The content of influential online groups is also often as invisible as the people taking part in them. This is because messaging platforms like WhatsApp are encrypted and designed as extremely private spaces.

There can be benefits to encryption of course. Protest movements depend on this security to protect themselves from the threat posed by undemocratic states. But elected politicians should not abuse the capabilities of digital media like the encryption mechanisms of platforms. Otherwise, society risks losing track of government communications related to important matters such as Brexit. The history can be deleted or hidden away in private company servers. While Downing Street's confidential memos on the prorogation were eventually released, such digital communications remain out of reach.

The other problem here is that government business is increasingly conducted on the communication platforms of private companies. What power does this give Whatsapp, and its parent company Facebook, over the communications of our governments?

We still know relatively little about how messaging platforms are reshaping parties' internal operations. Unless we turn the spotlight on these internal dynamics, shadow organisations inside parties will continue to influence politics with no accountability.

■ Aliaksandr Herasimenka and Anastasia Kavada are academics at the School of Media and Communication, University of Westminster; this article also appears at theconversation.com

What Britain can learn from Ireland

Bonnie Greer

Returning from another trip to Dublin, it is apparent to me that Ireland is ready for the 'Roaring Twenties'.

Of course it has its problems. That, no one can deny. For example, one of my previous visits brought me face to face with a young Irish woman of colour who told me about the discrimination she faces, the assumptions made about her because of the colour of her skin. On another, a woman told me about her country's assumption of male privilege.

And, like other places, many of the citizens of Ireland are not participating in the surge in wealth that tech is bringing to the country.

Equality of wealth creation is the business of politics and what politicians must do. But there is something else politicians must do, too. Something else that has to do with a sense of what the world is about and the place their nation has in it.

The flight between Dublin and London is not long. But crossing the Irish Sea presents the question of the mid-size nation-state. Where does it fit now in this turbulent world? What does it do?

A nation is like a grand house. It must present itself in a way that makes it look worthy of its status, its reason to be.

Ireland was born, in some ways, in the street. The Easter Rising was a reaction and an action, both geared towards ordinary people. They fought in the public square. They fought for freedom. So the grand house that is Ireland is about, above all else, freedom.

The absurdity of the subtext that the UK directs towards it in matters of politics causes the nation to always have to take a position in relation to its former coloniser. This has to be exhausting and boring.

Of course, the UK still has part of itself on the island, in the national space. That is another question. But can the very presence of Britain serve, in a sense, to make the nation stronger? Yes, and this strength is demonstrated by its formidable foreign secretary and deputy leader of the country, Simon Coveney.

Someone tweeted to me once that there is nothing nice about a man from Cork. I don't know what that means, but *niceness* is not required in his position. Clarity and a sense of where his country stands in the world is. And Coveney is second to no one there. He is the best foreign secretary right now in the world.

At the weekend, he told the BBC's *Andrew Marr Show* what should have been obvious: that there is no guarantee that the UK will be able to strike a trade agreement with the EU.

"Just because a British parliament decides that British law says something doesn't mean that law applies to the other 27 countries of the European Union."

He added: "The European Union will approach [its negotiations with the UK] on the basis of getting the best deal possible, a fair and balanced deal, to ensure the UK and the EU can interact as friends in the future. But the EU will not be rushed on this just because Britain passes law."

This may seem like an elementary point. But with the landslide that the Conservatives won last month we are in other territory. It's a bit mystical.

I have been told constantly by elements of the Twitter world to be kind; to tiptoe quietly around Leave supporters lest they perceive that I accuse them of being deluded or stupid or worse.

It is as if Remainers are expected to sit back, be docile and accept the result. I have never thought that being docile about what you believe in is very British and, besides, Brexit is a process. A journey.

Ireland presents the UK with a possibility of a reality check. Ireland can broker with the US Congress, for example, in any trade deal with Washington. Since most people know that the president only makes a temporary deal, and that the Congress ratifies, the UK will need friends. Trade with the US involves each of the 50 states, which are sovereign through the lower House. In other words, various trade bodies, lobbying groups and so on appeal to their representatives in Congress about ratification.

Nancy Pelosi, speaker of the House of Representatives, has already warned the Congress would block any deal between the US and the UK which threatens peace in Ireland: "The peace of the Good Friday Agreement is treasured by the American people and will be fiercely defended on a bicameral and bipartisan basis in the United States Congress." In other words: IOTUKN, Ireland owes the UK nothing.

But in this 'Festival of Brexit' moment, it seems to be very difficult for those who govern the nation to face reality. The reality is that Brexit and trade deals will take years. In the meantime, what will Britain do?

It can watch Ireland, watch how it positions itself as a medium-sized state in a global world. It is not doing things perfectly. But it understands itself in the Big World. It understands itself on a global stage. And maybe it can teach a post-imperial nation, a medium-sized nation, an ageing nation, how it can be, too.

What some call the most pillaged poem in the English language, Yeats' *The Second Coming* contains these lines:

Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
The best lack all conviction, while the worst
Are full of passionate intensity.

Maybe this poem is more about Yeats' mysticism. Maybe it is about another century: the 19th. Maybe it is more about the poet's own feelings about the doom of Western civilisation following the First World War.

But as I was taken on a tour of the great Abbey Theatre on an earlier visit to Dublin, I thought about this temple to theatre, and the fact that the nation had formed itself culturally before it did politically. In other words, the Abbey Theatre existed before the Irish Republic. It came into being to dream the nation.

If the United Kingdom can bury its inherent imperialist attitude/response to the Republic, then Ireland has lessons to teach.

And maybe a way of helping Britain settle into its new place in the world. As one, among many.

LETTERS: Have your say, email letters@theneweuropean.co.uk

The Remainers are gone. Long live the Regainers!

You ask "What comes after Remain?" (*TNE* #177). To restyle ourselves I propose 'Regain'.

'Rejoin' doesn't say why. Regain implies, in a single word, that something has been taken from us and we want it back!

From the day we leave the EU, let's change from Remainers to Regainers.

Tony Thorne
Harrow

The key word missing from your front cover was 'Return!'. This is the most appropriate banner to rally round throughout the next phase of reactionary activity.

We want to return to our home, Europe. Whether supporters are small children, angry independents, distraught parents, or grieving grandparents "I want to return to my home" is a sentence of fundamental identification and purpose.

Adrian Wykes,
Évrange and Manningtree

While James Ball's assessment of what happens next to the 'Remain coalition' ("As one cause dies, others arise", *TNE* #177) is balanced and very sensible, it leaves out the most important – but unpredictable – element. Michael White, in his weekly assessment, touches upon this: "Events, dear boy, events."

What if, in six to 12 months, Brexit really does prove to be a car crash? Two weeks into 2020, we already have a foreign crisis. In 12 months the likelihood – give the current chaos and instability – is of many more, foreign and domestic crises. Ireland looms.

Boris Johnson says austerity is over, but local councils and community services are still cutting back – libraries, police, schools, healthcare, youth services, infrastructure. Lots of promises have been made over the NHS, but where is the money?

More long term there is climate change – more flooding, the collapse of fish stocks, growing global instability, famine, environmental pollution.

Never before has there been the potential for so many things to go wrong, and to manage them we have an egocentric but clown-like occupant in Downing Street.

Five years is a long time now. Things are likely to get a lot worse, rather than better.

Garth Groombridge
Southampton

Animal readers of THE NEW EUROPEAN

Buster

Here's Buster, head of the Brown-Mulhern household, pointedly admiring *TNE*'s pic of a pantomime dame while giving the cold shoulder to the ham actor on the other page.

■ Does the animal who runs your household read *TNE*? Send photographic evidence and crucial biographical details to letters@theneweuropean.co.uk, putting 'Animal Readers' in the subject field

REWIND: Last week's *TNE*

SPECIAL ISSUE ON THE NEXT CHAPTER FOR PRO-EUROPEANS
THE NEW EUROPEAN
#177 ★ www.theneweuropean.co.uk ★ Thursday, January 9 - Wednesday, January 15, 2020 ★ £3
REVAMP? RECONNECT? REBOOT? RETREAT? RELOCATE? REPENT? RELAX? RENAME? REJECT? RELAUNCH? REDEFINE? RESPECT?
WHAT COMES AFTER REMAIN?
RESIST? REJOIN? REFLECT? REVOLT? RETIRE? REBEL? REBUILD? RELENT? REST? REGROUP?
IRAN CRISIS JOHN KAMPFNER ON HOW TEHRAN SPLIT THE WEST

Although I have the greatest respect for AC Grayling and cannot fault his analysis of the present political situation ("A return to Europe is possible… and need not be far away", *TNE* #177), nevertheless I find his proposed solution an unbelievably rosy response to it.

"Imagine the effect of assemblies set up by citizens themselves around the country… providing opposition to government moves to weaken our democracy..." Yes, I can easily imagine the response of the Boris Johnson government, which would be to barely notice any such manifestations of popular will, brushing them off like so many annoying flies. If the massive demonstrations in favour of a second referendum could not influence policy when we had a minority government, what effect now that it holds a huge majority?

Yes, peoples' assemblies are indubitably effective, as has been shown in Canada, Iceland and Ireland. Belgium set up an ongoing pilot people's assembly in 2019 to run alongside its parliamentary system, funded by the EU.

But this is no spontaneous 'kangaroo' system. It has been formally organised, and is made up of randomly selected members of the public, who are independently briefed on the issues they are chosen to discuss (topics selected by a separate council, or by a member of parliament, or by a mere 100 signatures from the population).

A similar system, if implemented here, could just possibly influence the Johnson government. But to have any credence, it would need to be accepted and funded in the first place by the government of the day.

Then, yes, it could, indeed, lead to "a change in the political culture and the constitutional arrangements of our country". But the question is, is it feasible here in the UK, and how could it be set up?

Robert Behrman
Cookham Dean

Very rightly Professor Grayling refers to the "tsunami of falsehood and distortion pouring from social media and the tabloid press" and urges us to adopt citizens' assemblies to "become the vehicles of genuine democracy".

Which, if it were to happen and succeed, would be splendid. But there are real difficulties in his idea. One is the massive task falling to someone or other to create and sustain any one such assembly, let alone a country-wide network.

And the unavoidable expense. Who would pay, without vested interest?

And, actually, the questionable legitimacy of such a start-up. He is looking at massive cost in terms of time, administration, hall-hire etc – and with the risk that the venture would not be more credible than our current structures – which are at least properly established, even if unsatisfactory.

(Revd) Paul King
Chesterfield

Let's keep on fighting. Farage fought for 18 years to leave the EU and he can't expect us to give up any sooner.

However, many of us are tired from the effort needed for the Remain struggle – we started before the first referendum and are flagging. So we need a steady long-term aim.

For the moment, climate change action and electoral reform are the most urgent issues. Domestically these are closely followed by social care and housing. This doesn't mean we are giving up on rejoining the EU but that we have to allow the Brexit process to start to give us the ammunition to fight it.

AC Grayling's idea of citizen assemblies sounds great but will still be seen as whinging by those who just want Brexit to go away. We need to leave enough time before starting something like this.

It would be good to have a psychological weapon in much the same way that "Get Brexit Done" was used to 'magic away' any awkward questions. We need to have a slogan for use when negotiations with the EU are not going in the direction promised by Brexiteers and when legislation protecting workers' rights, fishing rights etc are abandoned.

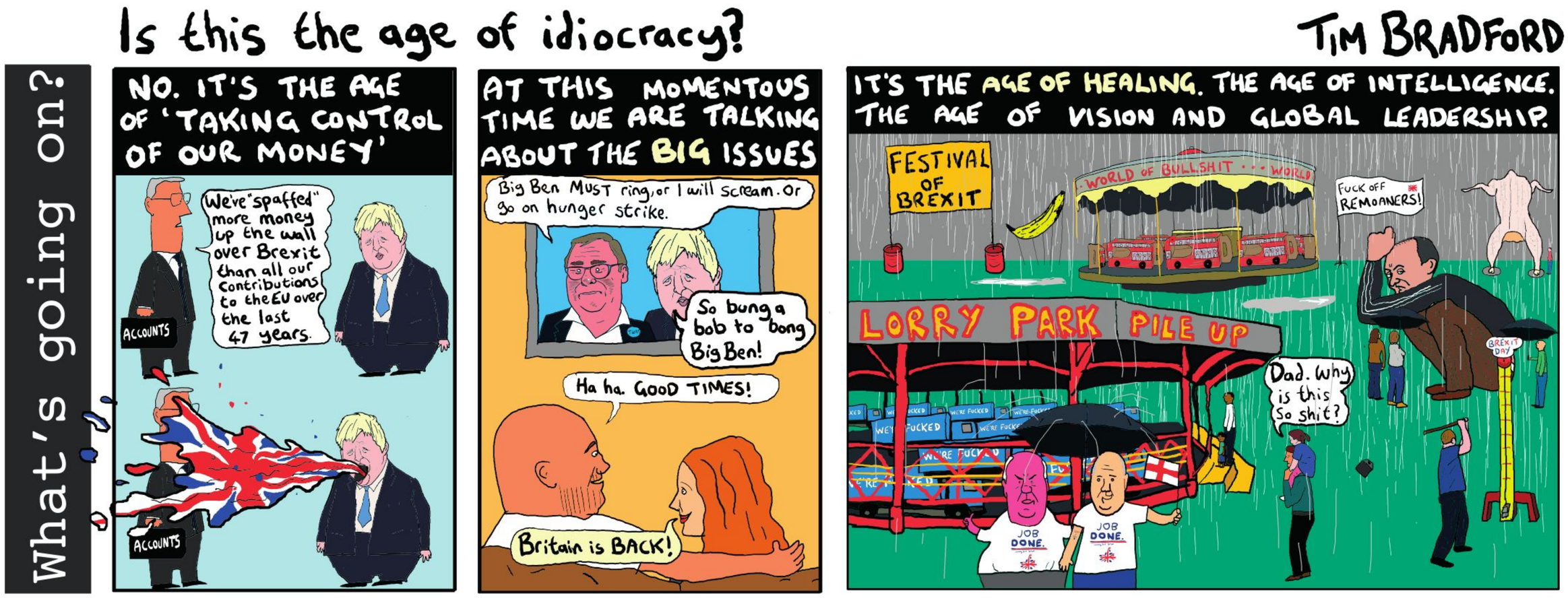
I have no idea what this phrase would be. I have considered "They Never Promised That" but you have a creative readership – someone will have a really bright idea.

Cathy French

While the contributions in your special edition were varied and impressive, they downplayed or ignored the issue that will have the greatest personal impact in the coming year – the intention to remove our right to live, work, study and retire across the EU and the effect that this will have upon the lives of countless British citizens.

The current proposals, which allegedly aim at a 'level playing field', take no account of where British citizens are most likely to want to emigrate – and the EU countries are at or near the top of that list. It's likely that many thousands will, indeed, be rushing for the exit doors in 2020 to beat the deadline... perhaps to the point where this creates disruption, including some labour shortages that can no longer be addressed by an influx of enthusiastic EU migrants.

This isn't just an issue for the young either. For example, a middle-aged person could have a long-term partner they wish to join in another EU country and ailing parents in their home city. Do they rush to relocate by the end of 2020, before the 'Australian-style' immigration system proposed by the government comes into



My, my, it's a song of Labour pie

Sung to the tune of American Pie, *with acknowledgement and apologies to Don McLean*

A long long time ago
I can still remember how
Labour used to make me smile
And I knew if they just had a chance
They could make the people dance
And maybe they'd be happy for a while.
But Momentum made me shiver
With every leaflet I'd deliver
Bad news on the doorstep
I couldn't take one more step.
I can remember that I cried
When I read about the big landslide
Something touched me deep inside
The day that Labour died.
So bye-bye to my party that died,
Heart so heavy, stopped my levy and swallowed my pride
Whilst them Good ole Boys wore Etonian ties
Singin' "This will be a decade of lies,
This will be a decade of lies."

Paul Stein
Pickering

effect, or do they delay their departure until 2021 or beyond and risk not being able to relocate at all? This is just one such scenario, and bringing the specific implications of the proposals to light will be an integral part of the campaign.

In that context, an attempt to modify the government's immigration proposals must be the top priority.

Norman Jope
Plymouth and Budapest

Us Remainers could emerge as the true UK patriots by joining together and calling for HMG to address at a 'Chinese speed' the twin challenge of post-Brexit competitiveness and sustaining the UK.

In this context, internal UK infrastructure is key to reassure inward investors and make doing business in the UK easier. All three London airports should be expanded. HS2 needs to go ahead post-haste, with extensions to Glasgow and Edinburgh.

A rail fixed link is necessary to interconnect the UK and enable goods from the island of Ireland and Belfast port to join trains bound for the rest of the UK and continental Europe via the Channel Tunnel.

A bigger defence budget is needed. The more useful the UK is in context of defence and security the more France and Germany will see the UK as a credible partner.

John Barstow

There are many other good and sensible reasons to stay in the EU, but human rights has been my driving force for being a Remainer – yes, you can have your Brexit but don't touch, remove or harm European fundamental freedoms! Now that is what appears to be happening.

The removal of human rights knows no constituency boundaries; it will affect us all even if you are Remainer, Leaver, Tory, or whatever.

If the government fails to protect UK citizens and weakens their rights then we must consider campaigning for legally binding associate EU membership.

Peter Morris
King's Lynn

March in May

We in Britain will soon be stripped of our European citizenship but many of us still feel European and feel that we have a European identity in addition to an English, Welsh, Scottish or Northern Irish one.

On Saturday May 9, 2020, Europe Day will be celebrated throughout the continent. Perhaps it would be appropriate to hold a march or marches here in the UK on this day to celebrate our shared European identity.

Despite what the populists may say, it would not be unpatriotic to celebrate 75 years of peace in Europe, to celebrate years of shared prosperity, to celebrate our cultural and linguistic differences and to celebrate the ongoing development of environmental protections

The march would be a signal to the populists that millions of people still believe in the European peace project. Resist *and* rejoice.

Huw Jones

Scots miffed

None of the correspondents in your special edition pays any serious attention to the situation in Scotland except to note that the SNP at Westminster is "in rude health".

Have you any idea of the deep anger felt by large sections of the population here at the prospect of leaving the EU? This is not just about economics, but also about cultural ties which go back centuries before the union with England. Our legal system, our religious traditions, our university organisation and many other facets of Scottish life have their roots in continental Europe. People are aware of that.

Indeed, you should be supporting the growing movement for Scottish independence: it could be argued that this would encourage a serious reappraisal in England and Wales of where this disastrous Conservative Party and government are leading us.

Richard Ross
(a subscriber from the very first edition)
Edinburgh

Pauline Carruthers' attacks on the quality of services in Scotland (Letters, *TNE* #177) do not bear scrutiny, especially if you have experience of other parts of the UK.

In the east of England three years ago, the normal wait for an appointment with my GP was two weeks. In Scotland I can usually get a GP appointment the same day or, at worst, the day after.

The number of GPs, hospital doctors, nurses and hospital beds per resident are all higher than in England. NHS waiting lists are lower, in spite of the fact that A&E waiting times in England are counted from the time the patient is first seen by a medic, not when they first arrive in hospital, which is the case in Scotland.

The number of police in Scotland has remained relatively constant over the past 10 years, unlike in England, where there are 20,000 fewer police on the beat than in 2010. Scotland does have particular problems, especially those related to substance abuse, but violent crime remains lower than in England.

My joint council tax and water bills are around £200 a year less in Scotland. Borders Railway, where I live, is far from perfect, but compared with the rush-hour trains into London Victoria, it is sheer luxury.

Finally, to suggest that the SNP lack support because only 30% of all who were entitled to vote voted for them, is unfair. The last time that one single party had an overall majority of the whole electorate were the Tories, back in 1931!

Pete Rowberry
Duns

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AGENDA

Chimes of doom: The sinister side of Brexit bell row

Fitting, isn't it, that the final battle of Brexit should be about the noise generated by a collection of ancient, slightly cracked, hollow instruments?

Veteran Eurosceptics Sir Bill Cash (79), David Davis (71) and Sir John Redwood (68) are among those demanding that Big Ben be made to chime at 11pm on January 31, which would cost £500,000, further delay renovations and upset half of the population. Meanwhile Leave.EU have launched a 'Ring for Brexit' crusade, urging churches across the land to ring out on February 1 with "a victory peal" like the one which marked the end of the Second World War.

This Battle of the Bells might sound laughable – especially when its frontline is manned by Mark Francois, the Matalan Mainwaring who Boris Johnson is currently seeking to mollify with his unlikely plan for Brexiteers to "bung a bob for a Big Ben bong". Scoff at your peril, though, for the parallel campaigns offer a fascinating rerun of referendum tactics and one of them is heading towards dangerous territory.

Like the official Leave campaign, the Bongers are Westminster-based, see financial and organisational chaos as a price worth paying to make its political point, and are ludicrous and pompous in equal measure.

How ludicrous? On January 7 I joked on Twitter that if Francois "was a true patriot he'd scale up the Elizabeth Tower shouting 'BONG' through a loudhailer"; two days later *Sky News* reported the MP was now "willing to take a big hammer up there and bong it himself". Hilariously, Francois now concedes that if his goal proved unworkable, "the BBC must have a recording of Big Ben chiming they could play at 11pm at no cost whatsoever to taxpayers".

The Bongers' original demands also included a call for pubs to stay open an hour later on January 31, quietly dropped when it was pointed out that most pubs stay open an hour later on Fridays anyway.

As for pomposity, 60 leading Bongers including Cash and Francois wrote to the *Sunday Telegraph* claiming that "leaving on Jan 31 will help to bring a degree of closure, not just in the House but hopefully among the public as a whole. Allowing Big Ben to chime could help to provide some catharsis in this process." Nonsense (do fans of the losing side get closure and catharsis from watching the winning captain lift the trophy?) which Remainers greeted with derision and which Arron Banks and the hardcore Pealers of Leave.EU no doubt treated with disgust.

For there is no talk of catharsis or hint of conciliation in the 'Ring for Brexit' statement on the Leave.EU website, alongside the usual appeals for your data and your donations. The vibe is more like the opening of *Terminator 2*, with a carpet of Remainer skulls getting crushed beneath the treads of Arron Schwarzenegger's Skynet hunter-killers.

It begins by saying that the morning of Saturday, February 1 will mark "the triumph of British democracy against a political elite who spent nearly four years trying to delay, sabotage, and deny the clearly expressed will of the British people.

"We suffered through every dirty trick imaginable in their long and protracted campaign to demoralise the country and force our surrender. We never gave up, and we won in the end… February 1 will be the most momentous morning in British history since the glorious day in 1945 when our country celebrated victory over the Nazi regime in Germany."

And that's not even the sinister bit! Here it comes: "Card-carrying Liberal Justin Welby, cosseted in gilded Lambeth Palace won't like this initiative one bit, the Church's hierarchy will do everything to snuff it out. Which is why we appeal directly to patriotic and principled churchgoers to put pressure on their local parish to join in on this epic gesture of national unity."

Put pressure on your local parish, eh? "Nice little religion you've got here, shame if something happened to it." Is that the kind of thing the Pealers of Leave.EU had in mind? The paragraph was later removed from its website.

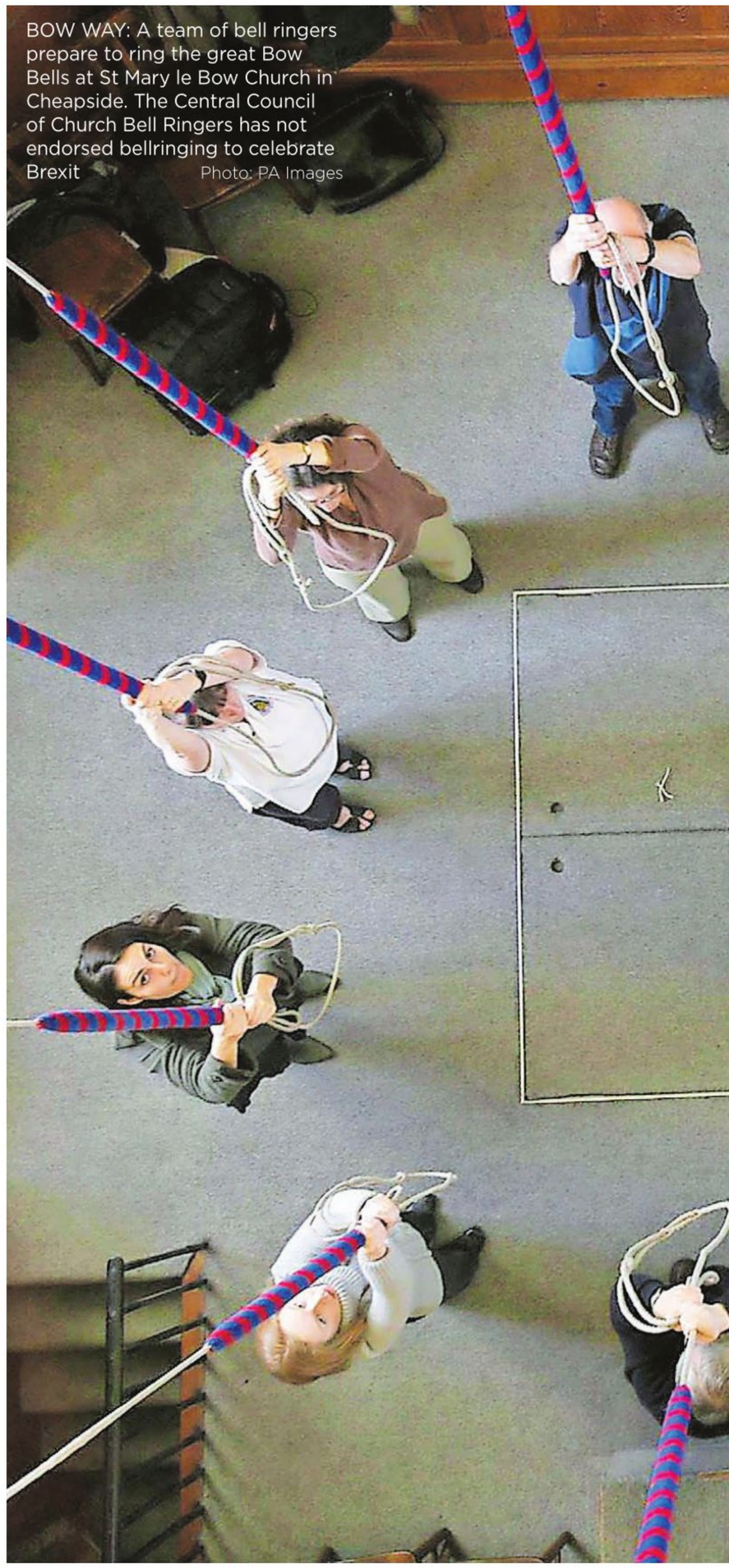
Happily, the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers has already put a damper on things by pointing out that it "does not endorse bell ringing for political reasons" and other churchfolk have emerged to say that on February 1 they will continue to help their communities rather than indulging in pointless partisan celebrations. So it seems that Arron Banks' unappealing peal appeal will largely be met by the sound of silence.

If so, one wonders what the next Leave.EU headline will be. "Who will rid us of these turbulent priests?" has a nice ring to it.

Nevertheless, while it's easy to dismiss them as a minority of cranks and extremists, Leave.EU is effective. Think the referendum would still have been won without them weaponising migration? Just look how well Nigel Farage's Brexit Party fared in the general election without Banks and his dog whistle.

Therefore it is truly worrying to see the church on their vile little checklist, joining the EU (now sadly ticked off), the fact-checked media, dissenting MPs, electoral safeguards, climate change protesters, the "metropolitan elite", Meghan Markle and the BBC licence fee.

What if what comes after Brexit is something even worse?



BOW WAY: A team of bell ringers prepare to ring the great Bow Bells at St Mary le Bow Church in Cheapside. The Central Council of Church Bell Ringers has not endorsed bellringing to celebrate Brexit Photo: PA Images

STEVE'S SELECTION… WHO'S CATCHING HIS EYE THIS WEEK

TED VERITY

The *Mail on Sunday* editor has rebranded February 1, and last week's paper contained a guide to "How our lives will change on Liberation Day". But was it the kind of thing Paul Dacre's former deputy had in mind? "British airlines will lose access to European air space, which means they won't be able to operate flights from one city to another within the EU," reported Abul Taher and Martin Beckford, also noting that "there could be queues at both Dover and Calais", "food prices may go up", "UK travellers to the EU may lose EHIC benefits and would be urged to take out private health insurance before travel", and we could face "higher roaming charges as the UK might be considered to be the 'rest of the world' zone". Liberation indeed!

THE (BEEF) DRIPS

Nothing annoys Brexiteers more than the idea that their votes may have been based on misinformation. So how to explain Ron Warwick from St Albans, who wrote to his favourite newspaper to declare: "Now that the UK is close to leaving the EU, together with all of the petty restrictions placed by them against us, I have just one New Year wish. Simply that UK residents will again be allowed to eat beef dripping. Two slices of dripping on toast on a winter's day, delicious." Of course beef dripping is not banned in the UK, by the EU or otherwise, and poor Ron has been denying himself his favourite unhealthy snack for years. Naturally though this didn't stop the *Daily Express* from printing an easily disprovable untruth on their letters page.

MADELINE GRANT

Worried about the European student exchange scheme Erasmus+ ending after Brexit? The *Telegraph*'s assistant comment editor told readers not to fret about their grandkids being denied a year's study abroad as the programme's true purpose was to "breed a generation of compliant Europhiles". Grant, *pictured*, harrumphed that the real Erasmus "would be appalled by the lack of rigour and the less than scholarly aims" – incredible insight into how a 16th century philosopher might deal with the scant evidence she presents, including that "those travelling to perpetually striking French universities… often enjoy something nearer a subsidised holiday or booze-up than a serious course of study". Tell that to one Brit who studied

in France thanks to Erasmus, and says the scheme was "a great example of how educational exchange can enhance students' understanding of other European countries". She is the Brexiteer MP Suella Braverman.

ZAC GOLDSMITH

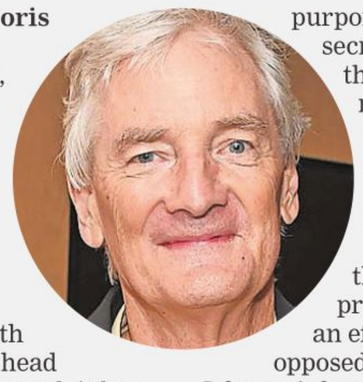
During his failed 2016 campaign to become mayor of London, the son of proto-Brexiteer Sir James Goldsmith wrote in City AM that it was a "belief in democratic accountability that informs my view of the European Union. The most important characteristic of any democracy is that it should be possible for voters to evict those who act in their name. The EU fails on that test. Real power in Brussels rests in institutions that are accountable to no one". On December 12, voters evicted Goldsmith from his jobs as MP for Richmond Park and an environment and development minister. On January 13 he returned to parliament as Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park and will retain a ministerial role, with a £305-a-day attendance allowance supplementing the £1.5m a year he receives from his trust fund. No word yet on how this squares with his belief in democratic accountability.

Mandrake

Tim Walker

mandrake@theneweuropean.co.uk @thattimwalker

Johnson donors flee to Cyprus



Embarrassingly for **Boris Johnson** as he sets about getting Brexit "done", Cyprus has come to have a special allure for some former and current Conservative Party donors precisely because it's an EU member state.

Alan Howard, one of Britain's best-known hedge fund managers; together with **Jeremy Isaacs**, the former head of Lehman Brothers Europe; and, it has been reported, the business tycoon **David 'Spotty' Rowland**, once (fleetingly) appointed Tory Party treasurer by **David Cameron**, have all applied to the island for second passports to retain their links to the EU.

According to the Electoral Commission, Howard donated at least £129,000 to the Tories personally and through his company between 2005 and 2009; Isaacs made personal and corporate donations amounting to £626,500; and Rowland around £6.5 million since 2001, £854,500 of it since the Brexit vote. Cypriot citizenship costs a minimum of two million euros of which at least 500,000 euros must be permanently invested on the island.

A lot of Brexit backers have already skedaddled, following the example of **Sir James Dyson**, *pictured*, now keeping abreast of developments from his £43m penthouse in Singapore. **Sir Jim Ratcliffe**, Britain's richest man, is off to Monaco.

Johnson cheerleader **Terry Smith** has been residing on Mauritius since 2017. It offers a favourable tax regime, with no inheritance or capital gains tax and a maximum income tax rate of 15%. His Fundsmith outfit has shifted £2.3bn worth of client assets into a Luxembourg SICAV investment scheme as part of its Brexit contingency planning.

Silent man

I didn't happen to bump into **Sir Keir Starmer** when we both took turns on *BBC Breakfast* over the weekend, but I'd have given him an earful if I had. There he was telling the show's viewers he wanted to reach out to everyone as he sought to be elected as Labour's leader, when, almost two weeks on, he's still to say whether or not he'll be willing to grant me an interview for this great newspaper.

It's true I've not always been Sir Keir's loudest cheerleader – anyone who purports to have been the shadow secretary of state for exiting the European Union for more than three years clearly has a lot to answer for – but I'd say he's probably the least bad option to take over from **Jeremy Corbyn**. If he gets the gig, Sir Keir's first priority should be building an effective alliance of parties opposed to Brexit and Boris Johnson's hard right ideology. I hear of overtures already being made towards him.

Green light

Since storming out of Boris Johnson's government – she accused the PM of mounting "an assault on decency and democracy" – **Amber Rudd** has wasted no time in finding gainful employment.

Documents filed at Companies House show that on November 6 last year – the day the former work and pension secretary stepped down as an MP – she set up a company concerned with "management consultancy activities other than financial management". Pretentiously, she's called it 'Amber's Office'. No word as yet from the Advisory Committee on Business Appointments about what they make of this.

Britt's back

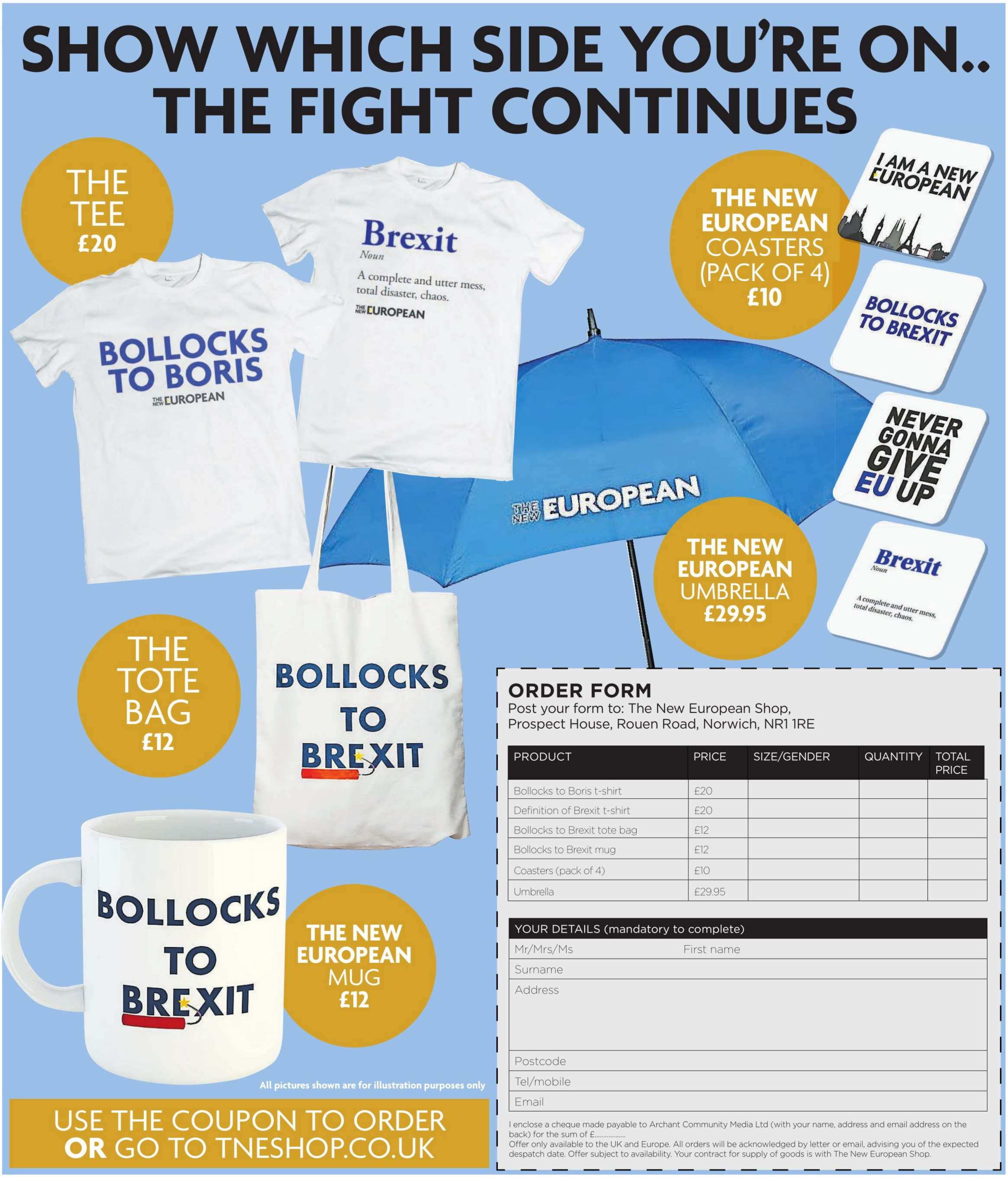
Britt Ekland, *pictured*, makes a welcome return to these shores in *The Cat and the Canary*, which has just opened at the Theatre Royal, Windsor. She'd sooner however divulge the identity of the murderer in the old whodunnit than say a word about Brexit.

"I'm just an actress so what do I know, but I guess we all get nostalgic as we get older," she tells me. "I see a lot of people saying what a great time it was creatively for Britain in the '60s and early '70s before the country joined the EU, but the country will always be a great creative hub. A lot of us look back to those times with affection just because we were younger then."

The former wife of **Peter Sellers** spent Christmas with most of the late actor's clan, but she resides mostly in Los Angeles.

I'm too much of a gentleman to divulge her age, but when I inquire about the secret to her eternal beauty, she says simply: "Good food and lots of make-up."

SHOW WHICH SIDE YOU'RE ON.. THE FIGHT CONTINUES



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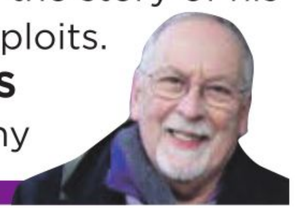
EXPERTISE

THE EXPLORER FROZEN OUT OF HISTORY

Reginald Koettlitz was one of the heroes of polar exploration, yet found himself shunned and written out the story of his greatest exploits. **GUS JONES** explains why



On January 10, 1916, in the small Karoo town of Cradock, South Africa, Dr Reginald Koettlitz passed away within two hours of his wife, Marie Louise Butez. He died of dysentery, she of heart disease.

For more than a decade, Koettlitz had been working as a country doctor in this remote region, often using a horse or pony-and-trap to call on patients in out-of-the-way places.

Such journeys would have presented little challenge for him, though. For in the years before he arrived in South Africa Koettlitz had travelled thousands of miles around the globe, and explored some of its most inhospitable places. He had been deep into the Arctic and, with Captain Scott, the Antarctic, and had also trekked through vast uncharted areas of Africa and, alone, up the Amazon to Manaos.

Yet, while other greats from this heroic age of exploration remain well-known names, more than a century on, that of Koettlitz has all but faded into obscurity.

It was a process that had begun long before his death. Indeed, his move to rural South Africa in 1905 was part of a withdrawal from the world of exploration in which he had been a leading figure.

It was not a deliberate retreat on Koettlitz's part, though. During his final years in South Africa he still hankered for the chance to take part in one more great polar expedition. But by then Koettlitz had become increasingly alienated from the exploration establishment – a process which stemmed from his fractious relationship with Scott and criticism of his daredevil approach to polar expeditions, which ultimately led to his death on the ice in 1912.

While Scott was lauded and then eulogised, his former colleague Koettlitz was sidelined and then forgotten. It is high time that historical slight was corrected.

He came from an itinerant family which had moved from Konigsberg, in Prussia, to Germany, then Ostend, in

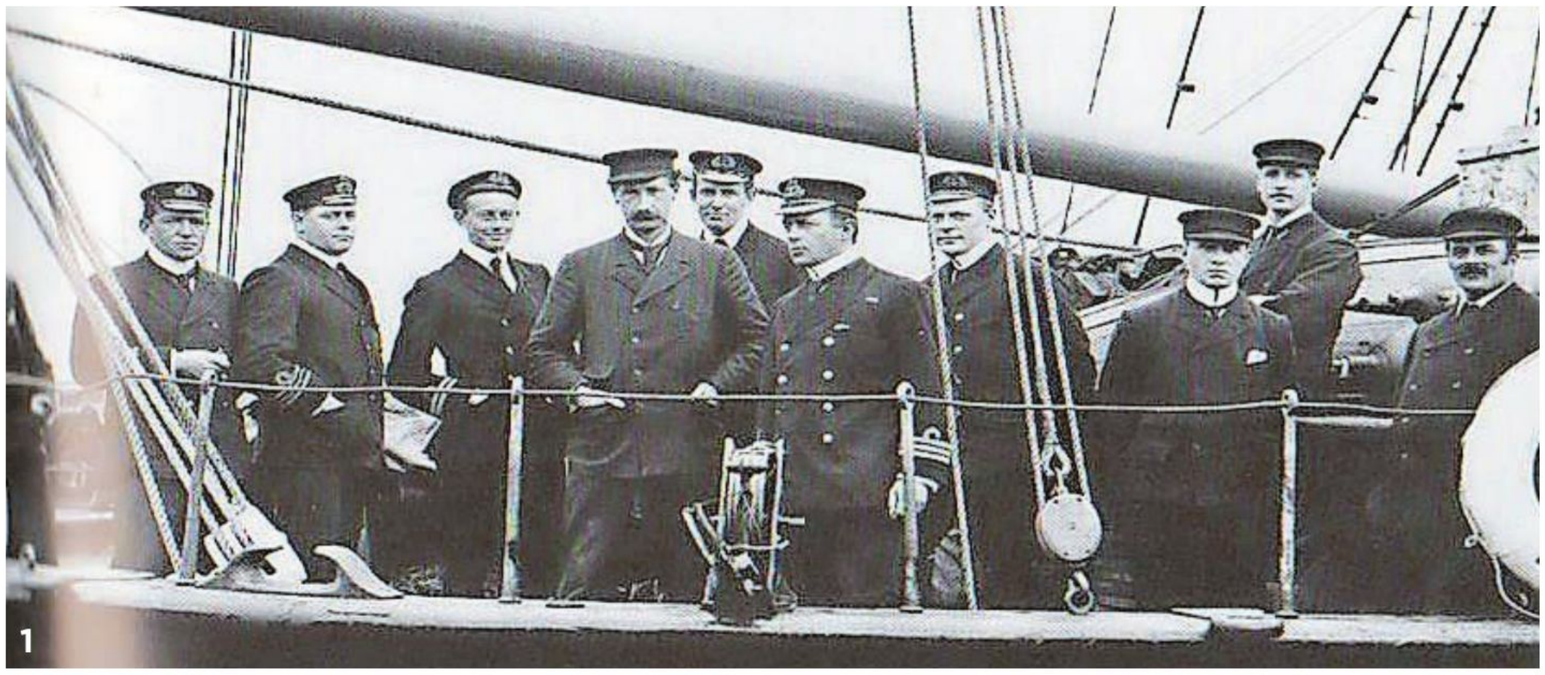
Turn to page 24

OBSCURITY:
1 Dr Reginald Koettlitz on expedition in 1897

2 Geologist Raymond Priestley takes a reading from a piece of scientific equipment at the Koettlitz Glacier during Scott's Antarctic expedition in 1910-13

Photos: Getty Images

EXPERTISE



From page 23

Belgium, where Reginald was born in 1860.

His father was a minister in the Reformed Lutheran Church, his mother, Rosetta Dowdeswell, a English teacher. They were a family of some considerable wealth but had fallen on hard times as a result of the gambling debts incurred by a previous minister of the church.

Shortly after Reginald's birth the family were on the move again, this time across the Channel to Dover, where his father resumed his duties as a church minister. Reginald, like his brothers, attended Dover College before qualifying as a doctor at Guy's Hospital, London and Edinburgh University.

His first practice was as a GP and surgeon to mines in Butterknowle, County Durham. It was here he gained experience in treating not only common ailments but injuries sustained by miners in the open and underground workings.

But his horizons were broader than County Durham's Gaunless valley and he secured an appointment as physician on an expedition – led by Frederick George Jackson and financed by newspaper proprietor Alfred Harmsworth – to the Arctic. Jackson had been misled by false maps into believing that Franz Jozef Land, an archipelago deep inside the Arctic Circle and only 500 miles from the North Pole, was in fact a land mass which reached the pole.

The Jackson-Harmsworth expedition involved three testing years spent on the islands. The group was only the second to live and survive on the archipelago.

One day, during their second year in the region, the group were startled by the sudden appearance of "a tall man, wearing a soft felt hat, loosely made, voluminous clothes, and long shaggy hair and beard". It turned out to be the Fridtjof Nansen, the Norwegian explorer, who with his sole companion Hjalmar Johansen had been living on the ice since leaving their ship Fram more than a year earlier in an abortive attempt to reach the North Pole. It was chance that had brought Nansen and Johanssen to the Jackson-Harmsworth expedition camp and helped guarantee their survival.

As for Koettlitz, one of his main medical challenges during the expedition was to keep the men from suffering from scurvy. Their supplies soon ran low and they were forced to live from the land. This meant killing and consuming birds and animals which they found on Franz Josef Land. Polar bears in particular became a regular food source and more than 80 were killed during the expedition – providing nourishing dishes such as bear's blood soup – along with hundreds of birds. Two sailors on the expedition ship *Windward* died from scurvy, having refused this diet, but none of the land party suffered from the disease.

It was an important lesson that Koettlitz was to take with him when he took part in Scott's *Discovery* expedition to the Antarctic, from 1901 to 1904.

Koettlitz was appointed as senior surgeon for Scott's trip and was also responsible for specific scientific duties.

A MAN APART:
1 A group of officers onboard the *Discovery*

2 Koettlitz pictured on *Discovery*

3 *Discovery* locked in the ice at the Antarctic

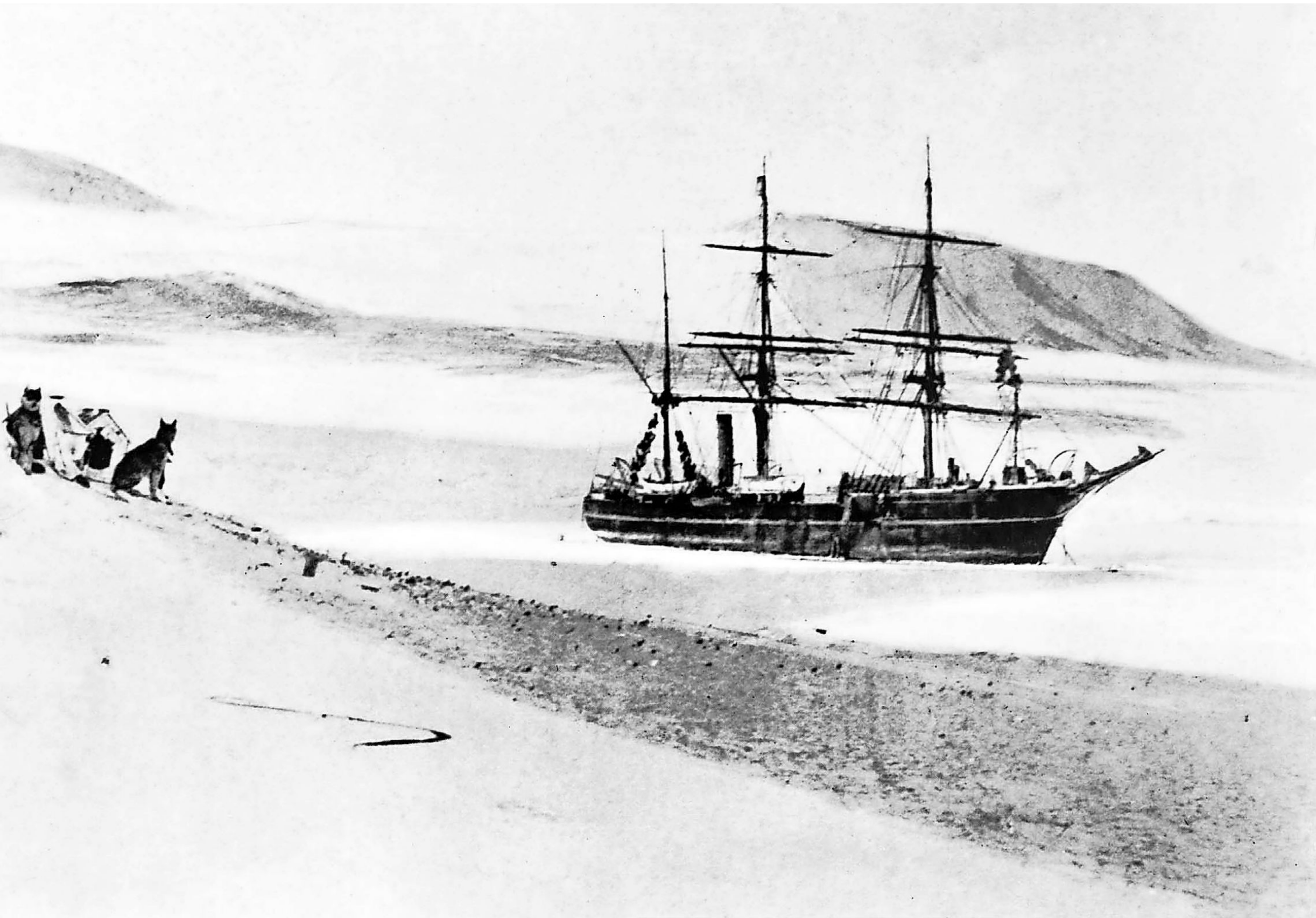
Photos: Contributed

Prior to departure to the south he led the group responsible for equipment and provisions. From time in the Arctic Koettlitz knew the importance of using native Samoyed-type clothing, made primarily from Reindeer skin and fur.

But this English-based expedition ignored his advice, opting for ineffective man-made clothing, to the detriment and safety of the expedition members. But it was thought essential by the planners that personal tastes were catered for and under the title of 'medical comforts', 27 gallons of brandy and whisky, 60 gallons of port wine, 36 gallons of sherry and a similar amount of champagne were carried to the Antarctic continent. To enhance morale on the lower deck 1,800lbs of tobacco was also stowed away.

Having met Nansen on Franz Josef Land, Koettlitz had stayed in contact with the Norwegian and regularly sought his advice on matters relating to survival in the polar regions.

In their correspondence, Koettlitz was often scathing on the way the expedition



was being organised, with Scott himself and Clements Markham, the president of the Royal Geographical Society, the target of particular criticism. "I fear there will be much blundering, waste of time and money, it will be muddled through *à l'Anglais*," Koettlitz wrote, in remarks that were eerily prescient in the light of Scott's ultimate fate. "How can men be such fools, men who have no knowledge of survival in the polar-regions?" he asked. He also wondered whether the men would take his advice to 'live off the land', eating seals and penguins to ward off scurvy.

As he feared, once they reached the ice his recommendations were often ignored and some of the men did develop scurvy, something Koettlitz was able to address by introducing his fresh meat diet.

The main goal of the expedition was the exploration of the interior of the Antarctic land mass, which was at the time mainly unexplored. Koettlitz was deeply involved in this work. He made a series of epic sledge journeys from the base in McMurdo Sound where the *Discovery* was locked in the ice for the duration of the expedition.

His main sledge journey with Albert Armitage, who had also been a colleague on the Jackson-Harmsworth expedition, involved the ascent of the Transantarctic Mountains. The pair became the first men to step on the polar plateau, having reached a height of almost 9,000ft.

Other treks included sledge journeys to Black and Brown Islands, where he ascended to a height of 2,750ft discovering it was a volcanic cone and crater. These journeys and scientific discoveries were described in his extensive expedition journals and letters.

On return to Dover in 1904, Koettlitz gave one extended lecture in Dover Town Hall where he displayed the first colour images taken on the Antarctic continent. He was an accomplished photographer but, as with much with regard to Koettlitz, these images were handed to the expedition managing committee and have been lost to science and the nation.

It is a fitting metaphor for the way Koettlitz's own story was overlooked. A clever but stubborn man, this polar explorer of great knowledge and experience suffered from an image problem from the very beginning.

His stubborn streak led to disagreements with Scott and a strained relationship. The pair would often play each other at chess during the expedition, with the eccentric surgeon's victories causing Scott much annoyance.

Koettlitz was a serious man frustrated by those who lacked the same professional approach and therefore regarded by others as aloof and uptight. The idea of taking grease-paint to the Antarctic, to allow the men to stage morale-boosting shows, horrified him – as did playing football when they should be practising putting up tents.

Of course, critics would later point to Scott's less than meticulous attitude as a contributory factor behind his death on the tragic Terra Nova expedition in 1912.

As something of an outsider on the expedition, therefore, Koettlitz was pushed into the shadows on its return. Although he had been made chief of scientific staff, his position wasn't recognised in Scott's book of the expedition, *The Voyage of the Discovery*. Worse, none of his work featured in the expedition's final scientific reports. Even a report to the *British Medical Journal* was presented by Koettlitz's deputy on the ship. This falling out with the polar establishment led ultimately to his move to South Africa, where he practised as the resident doctor in the expanse of the Great Karoo.

In Cradock there is a memorial to him erected by the residents of the region. There is no monument in England, just a polar bear shot by him on Franz Jozef Island now on display in Dover Museum.

To really find his fitting honours, though, you have to go to the ends of the earth: To the Koettlitz Glacier, one of Antarctica's largest, and to Reginald Koettlitz Island, part of Franz Josef Land, both named in his honour.

■ A A 'Gus' Jones is author of *Scott's Forgotten Surgeon*

EXPERTISE

INSIDE THE FANTASY FACTORY

Amid the gloom on the high street, one British retail chain is quietly achieving its strategy of global domination. **IAN STURROCK** explores the remarkable rise of Games Workshop

In an era defined by online shopping and falling real incomes, the high street can seem like a morass of zombie companies, hauling their carcasses from one sales season to the next until someone puts them out of their misery.

One honourable exception is Games Workshop, a company that makes its money by selling zombies instead, alongside wizards, space orcs and all other accessories for the dedicated fantasy gamer.

Had you invested £1,000 in the firm's shares at the end of 2009, you would now be sitting on a pot of more than £25,000. The company is the best performing FTSE250 retailer of the past decade – and second best performer overall. So what's going on in those dungeons? What lessons can this impressive operator teach the rest of the high street?

Founded in London in the mid-1970s by Ian Livingstone and Steve Jackson – who would later became famous for co-authoring the *Fighting Fantasy* choose-your-own-adventure books – Games Workshop evolved quickly in its first few years of existence. It went from manufacturing and distributing traditional board games to focusing on fantasy fare, above all Dungeons & Dragons, the cult role-playing game from America that would define the whole genre.

The company soon launched the *White Dwarf* magazine, which became a bible for fantasy gamers, and moved into manufacturing miniatures for wargaming under its Citadel Miniatures brand.

It soon began to build its business around these miniatures and, to a lesser extent, the Warhammer tabletop fantasy game, which launched in 1983. By the mid-1980s, *White Dwarf* had stopped covering Dungeons & Dragons and other people's games to solely concentrate on the Games Workshop universe.

This narrow focus has essentially continued up to the present day. It is key to understanding the business. To investors and retail staff alike, the company has long referred to its strategy as "total global domination". It barely acknowledges the existence of competing games or miniatures, perhaps with good reason; it has no real competitors who can match its vertical integration in the marketplace.

Most other wargames manufacturers are just cottage industries with no presence on the high street: the next most successful achieves less than 2% of Games Workshop's £257 million turnover. The company's stores stock only its own products, though it is more than happy to sell them elsewhere: 47% of sales come from third-party retailers, while a further 19% are online.

Staff have regularly described the company as making the "best fantasy miniatures" in the world. Where most big Western retailers outsource manufacturing to contractors on the other side of the world, the firm makes almost everything at its own factory in Nottingham, also the location of the company headquarters.

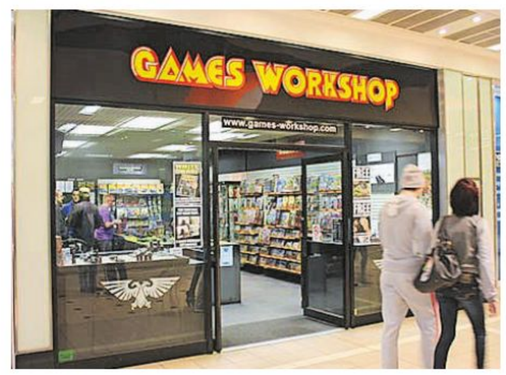
Games Workshop now has 500 stores worldwide – a fifth of them major outlets, while the rest are one-vendor operations. Most of the bigger stores are in the UK, Europe and Australia, and total global domination has no room for passengers: loss-making stores are quickly reorganised to make a profit, or closed. There are also a smattering of stores in North America and Asia, though the company has never achieved critical mass in those markets like it has in the UK.

The stores function not just as retailers but as clubhouses devoted to the hobby: collecting, painting and occasionally even gaming with the miniatures. Fans and customers obsess over both these figures and the complex fictional worlds in which the games are set.

Everything is built around two settings – one fantasy and one science fiction. You could legitimately accuse them of being derivative of the pop culture over the past half-century or so. But they function as fully realised, complex worlds complete with spin-off novels, comics, card games, computer games, and even a film – though *Ultramarines: A Warhammer 40,000 Movie* was hardly a classic. The logic is to give the dedicated fan so much to consume that there is no need, or indeed very much time, to bother with anything else.

One potential threat to this close relationship with customers in the past was the company's approach to defending its intellectual property. Its legal department long had a reputation for zero tolerance, attracting heavy criticism, for example, for taking action to prevent an author from selling a book about space marines. My sense is that the company has become much less litigious since Kevin Rountree took over as CEO in 2015.

Buying into the Games Workshop hobby is not cheap, it should be said. You can easily pay over £50 for just a dozen plastic figures, for instance, plus another £25 for paints and brushes. This attracts regular gripes from both fans and the press, and is presumably integral to the company's surging share price and mainly strong financial results.



SUCCESS STORY: Games Workshop's fantasy figures have built a powerful brand

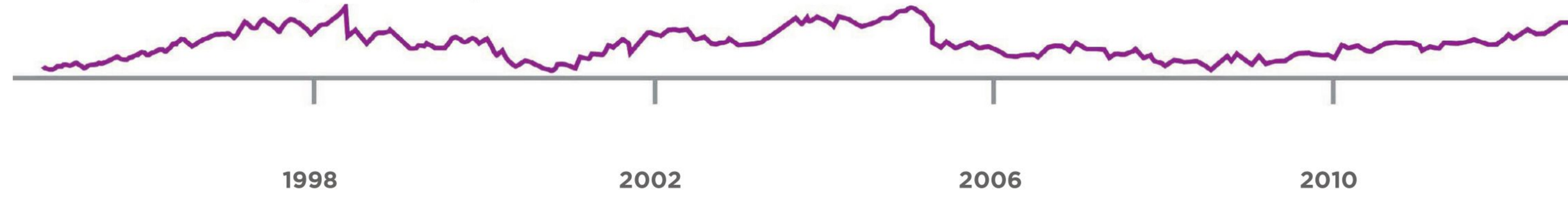
Photos: games-workshop.com/en-GB/Gallery/ Wikipedia

Yet steep prices are only viable if the product is good enough. The company has regularly rebooted and reinvented its own games and worlds over the years, though arguably they can never be well enough tested to satisfy competitive gamers. The complexity of each game system and the need to bring out new versions to sell more models tends to mean that one strategy becomes too dominant.

The company has also innovated in other ways – recently, for example, formulating revolutionary new paints and painting techniques to make it easier for the customers to get great results with their figures.

Can the success story continue? There seems every reason to assume that it can. It might even benefit from the mounting concerns around the carbon emissions

Game's Workshop's share price



WORLD OF WARHAMMER

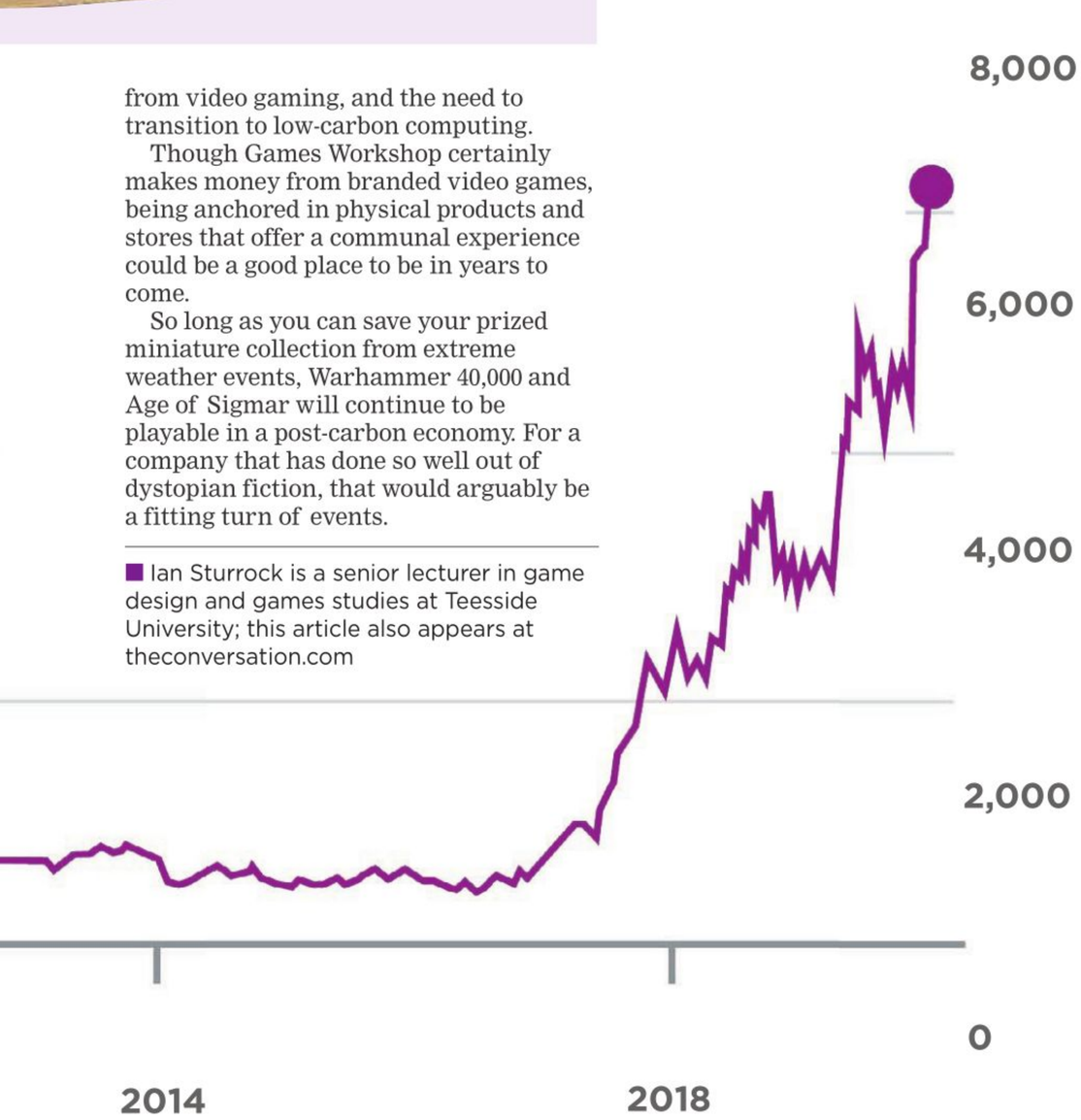
The game was created in the early 1980s and involves battles between armies from different factions.
It is inspired by medieval warfare, incorporating fantasy elements, such as wizards, dragons and magical spells. The setting is heavily inspired by the fiction of JRR Tolkien and Michael Moorcock.
Players use miniature models to represent warriors, including elves, dwarfs, orcs and goblins.
The outcome of fights are determined by a combination of dice rolls and arithmetic.
Games may be played on any appropriate surface, although the standard is a 6ft by 4ft tabletop decorated with model scenery in scale with the miniatures.
The final version was released in 2010, and the game has been supplanted by Warhammer Age of Sigmar – released in 2015 – which uses a similar fictional setting but has a different design ethos.

from video gaming, and the need to transition to low-carbon computing.

Though Games Workshop certainly makes money from branded video games, being anchored in physical products and stores that offer a communal experience could be a good place to be in years to come.

So long as you can save your prized miniature collection from extreme weather events, Warhammer 40,000 and Age of Sigmar will continue to be playable in a post-carbon economy. For a company that has done so well out of dystopian fiction, that would arguably be a fitting turn of events.

■ Ian Sturrock is a senior lecturer in game design and games studies at Teesside University; this article also appears at theconversation.com



READING THE LIB DEM RUNES

As the Lib Dems look for a leader and sense of direction, **BARNABY TOWNS** searches for signs in the data thrown up by last month's election

You don't have to go too far back to remember a time when the Liberal Democrats were riding a wave of optimism. Last autumn the party was buoyed by a raft of defections, a by-election win, polling that peaked at 23%, and finishing ahead of the Tories and Labour in the earlier European elections. The onset of the winter blues was swift and brutal, with a faltering election campaign and disappointing result, yielding only a two-seat gain alongside three losses and a parliamentary group of only 11 – or 12 if Alliance Party allies' East Belfast win is counted, a seat standstill compared to 2017.

The party lost all three of its seats that voted Leave in 2016: Carshalton and Wallington, Eastbourne and Norfolk North. Wins from the Tories in strongly-Remain Richmond Park and St Albans, and against the Scot nationalists in North East Fife, offset those. The loss of Jo Swinson's East Dunbartonshire seat by 149 votes to the SNP completes the picture of modest parliamentary gains and losses. Other closely contested constituencies included near-misses in Remain-Tory Wimbledon, by 628 votes; Cheltenham (981); Winchester (985); and Remain-Labour Sheffield Hallam (712).

Indicative of the power of the Remain-Leave divide to shape 2019's election were large swings to Lib Dem candidates in heavily Remain seats, the highest of which was 18.5% in formerly safe-Tory Esher and Walton, Brexiteer Dominic Raab's seat. Others included South West Surrey – home to Remainer-turned-Brexiteer Jeremy Hunt – (15.6%); Hitchin and Harpenden (15.4%); Wimbledon (15.4%); South Cambridgeshire – Tory defector Heidi Allen's former seat – (14.4%); Finchley and Golders Green – where one-time Labour MP Luciana Berger was the candidate – (14.2%); Wokingham – with incumbent arch-Brexiteer John Redwood challenged by ex-Tory Phillip Lee – (14.2%); Winchester (14.0%); Cities of London and Westminster – where Labour-turned-Lib Dem Chuka Umunna stood – (13.4%); Guildford (12.5%); Surrey Heath – Vote Leave champion Michael Gove's seat – (11.0%); St Albans (10.8%); and Theresa May's Maidenhead (10.1%).

What do these seats with over 10% Conservative-Lib Dem swings – the national swing was 1.5% – have in common? From Surrey Heath, which voted Remain in line with the national average, to the seat Umunna contested, where Remain won 72.0%, these battles pitted Lib Dems against Tory Brexiteers in seats where Remain outperformed, or in Gove's case equalled, its national showing.

While failing to make the net gains supporters, opponents and neutral observers anticipated, the Lib Dems did increase their vote share by more than the other main parties, earning a 4.2% boost. This compares favourably with the Tories' 1.3% rise; the SNP's 0.8% hike; and Labour's 7.8% decline. In 264 constituencies Lib Dem candidates received the highest vote share increase – Tories did so in 158; Labour in only four.

Another sign of relative Lib Dem improvement is the number of constituencies in which the party came second. With only 7% of 2017's popular vote, the party secured second place in a mere 38 seats; in 2019, the party achieved this status in 91 contests, 80 of which the Conservatives won.

Perhaps unsurprisingly given the party's focus on appealing to Remain voters and targeting those in Tory seats, the Lib Dems did best away from the Brexit-backing Midlands, north of England and parts of Wales. In pro-Remain London, the party scored three points higher than nationally; while university, commuter and market towns pushed the Lib Dems six points higher than UK-wide in the south east and south west and one-point higher in eastern England.

In Scotland, unionist Lib Dems competed with the separatist SNP for the Remain vote, scoring 1.5% lower than the UK average. Lib Dem 11.5% national vote share in the 2019 election was a shade lower than the 13.5% 1945–2017 average.

And of the approximately 52% of voters who were Remainers, the Lib Dems won only one in five, despite placing Brexit front and centre of their campaign.

A poor campaign with bad messaging and a split Remain vote yielded underwhelming results that fell significantly short of the up to 100 seats touted by some months earlier. Revoking Article 50 in the unlikely event of an overall Lib Dem parliamentary majority and Swinson aiming to be prime minister unhelpfully dominated media – including after being dumped mid-campaign.

As the party chooses a new leader from among only 11 MPs, a Macron, Obama or Trudeau won't be found. But as the 2020s begin with a majority of 80 for a strengthened nationalist-populist Conservative Party, threatening a decade-long reign, the Lib Dems, alone or with allies, must find one. Liberals everywhere need the Lib Dems to raise their game.

EXPERTISE

KING CAD

Thirty years after the death of Terry-Thomas, **RICHARD LUCK** pays tribute to the man who represented a much-loved archetype

Way back in the infancy of mobile phones, one2one – now T-Mobile – ran a series of adverts in which celebrities explained which famous name they'd most want to have a one-to-one with. Kate Moss plumped for Elvis Presley, Chris Evans selected John Lennon and Ian Wright went with Martin Luther King. Vic Reeves also participated in the campaign. And who did Britain's top light entertainer wish to connect with? Why, Terry-Thomas, movie star, stage actor, cabaret performer, musician and a man with the sort of accent and aristocratic bearing one doesn't typically associate with the North London district of Finchley.

That's where the Terry-Thomas story began, though – at 53 Lichfield Grove on July 14, 1911. The future star of *School For Scoundrels* and *It's A Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World* was born Thomas Terry Hoar Stevens. His father Ernest held down a decent job at Smithfield Market so allowing young Tom to attend Ardingly College in West Sussex.

Surrounded by chinless wonders and people so posh that they appeared to be speaking a language other than English, Master Hoare Stevens began to fashion the act that would later become his fortune. For while he wouldn't have dared leave the house without a carnation and his cigarette holder, Terry-Thomas wasn't truly a toff – rather he affected the manner of an aristo better than any actor before or since.

Such was his gift for performance and his love of the cinema, it was no great surprise that his post-school Smithfield job didn't work out. He took his first steps towards celebrity on the stage, making his professional debut aged 19 in 1930. Since he could sing and play both percussion and the ukulele, he was soon in demand on the cabaret circuit.

There was also an abundance of movie extra work going around, so should you find yourself watching such classics of the 1930s as *The Private Life Of Henry VIII* or *Things To Come*, see if you can spot Terry swanning around in the background.

With the Second World War having put his ascent on hold, Terry Thomas as he then was – the hyphen wouldn't arrive until 1948 – headed back to the stage, becoming a big wheel in the West End, courtesy of the Piccadilly Hayride revue.

Besides bagging a radio show on the back of his theatrical success, Terry became the first comedian to have his own television show. *How Do You View?* aired to huge audiences between 1949 and 1953. By the time it came off air, Finchely's favourite son also had his first major movie credits to his name, none more eye-catching than the leading role in 1949's *Melody Club*.

Any survey of 1950s British comedy films would be incomplete without mention of Peter Sellers, Ian Carmichael and Terry-Thomas. Sometimes the reprobates would appear in pairs – see Terry and Ian in 1956's *Private's Progress* and 1957's *Lucky Jim*, and Peter and Terry in *The Naked Truth* (1957) and 1959's *Carlton-Browne of the F.O.*

On other occasions, all three would be on hand as in the Boulting Brothers' acclaimed *I'm All Right Jack* (also 1959). Between them, Sellers, Carmichael and Thomas represented three compelling British archetypes – the lovable loser (Ian), the eccentric (Peter) and the absolute rotter (guess who?).

Though he was also – quite rightly – lauded for his performances opposite Alastair Sim in *The Green Man* (1956) and *Blue Murder at St Trinian's* (1957), it was in Carmichael's company that Terry cultivated cinema's ultimate cad. In 1960's *School For Scoundrels*, Thomas all but becomes Raymond Delauney, lover of fine wines and finer women and a fully paid-up graduate of Yeovil's School Of Lifemanship, an educational institute run by Alistair Sim's Dr Potter which is dedicated to the fine art of getting one over on a rival without truly cheating.

While Carmichael's good egg Henry Palfrey is hampered by sincerity and self-esteem issues, Delauney always has a withering word to hand ("Hard cheese, old boy!") not to mention a good line for Henry's intended, Janette Scott's April Smith ("What a romantic name. 'Oh to be in England now that April's here'!").

If Terry-Thomas seems very at home as the sports car and haute cuisine-obsessed Delauney, it's because he was no stranger to the finer things in life. As he based his distinctive speaking voice on the stage actor Owen Nares – the only man able to say 'creature' in as smarmy a manner as our hero – the actor affected the airs and graces of bona fide movie star Douglas Fairbanks Jr. As such, he developed a preference for bespoke suits and very specific foodstuffs (Ian Carmichael remembers his friend being insistent that strawberries ought always to be bathed in Marsala – 'bathed' that is, not 'soaked'). Such excess might have caused the odd eyebrow to be raised but it all adds to Delauney's wonderful richness. By the way, there was a 2006 American remake of *School For Scoundrels* in which Billy Bob Thornton played a hybrid of the Sim and Thomas roles. Naturally, it was appalling.

Even before *School For Scoundrels* was in the can, Terry-Thomas had enjoyed his first taste of trans-Atlantic fame courtesy of a role in George Pal's *Tom Thumb* (1958). When Pal cast him again in 1962's *The Wonderful Adventures of the Brothers Grimm*, Terry was sufficiently well known in the States that Stanley Kramer had him cameo in his all-star madcap extravaganza *It's A Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World*.

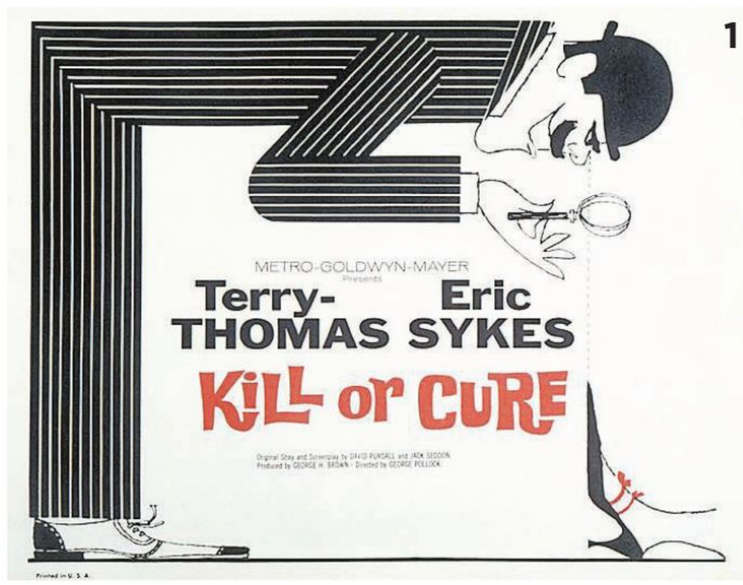
As Gustav Temple, editor of *The Chap*, remarked in a recent profile of the actor, Terry's work on the film did wonders for his international reputation, not so much because he was so good on screen but because he was so cooperative off it.

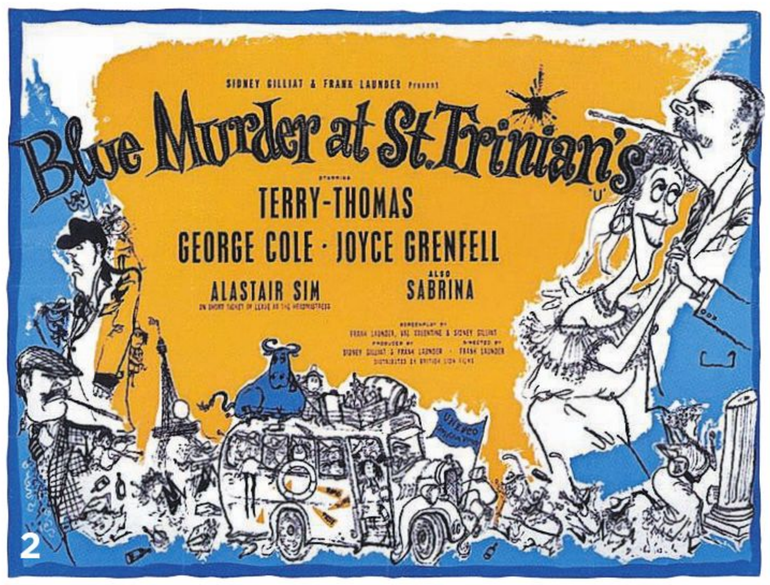
Sure, he could play the toff but Terry-Thomas was the furthest thing from a diva. Affable and ego-less, Terry was forever being offered roles in Hollywood productions and would end up sharing the screen with legends the likes of Jerry Lewis (1968's *Don't Raise the Bridge, Lower the River*) and Doris Day (*Where Were You When the Lights Went Out?*, also 1968). For the most part, however, he preferred to stay at home.

Home for Terry and his second wife Belinda meant a villa on Ibiza. Though regularly seen on screen wielding an umbrella, Thomas loved the sun and the pace of Mediterranean life. And while he enjoyed the company of other exiles like Orson Welles and Clifford Irving, he was very taken with the locals, as they were of him. They weren't the only Europeans to take a shine to the gap-toothed wonder, mind you.

Quite what it was about Terry that appealed to our continental cousins is hard to say. Perhaps it was complete and utter Englishness. Certainly this would explain why he was cast in Euro productions such as *La Grande*

UNMISTAKEABLE: Terry-Thomas in *When A Man Is Kept Late At The Office* (1954) Photo: Getty Images





INSPIRATIONAL BOUNDER

Terry-Thomas has been credited with inspiring many subsequent screen characters and performances.
Dick Dastardly, *pictured*, who appeared in Hanna-Barbera's *Wacky Races* cartoon, was partly based on the actor. Dustin Hoffman said he used Thomas as the basis for his role as Captain Hook in the film *Hook*, while Rupert Everett based Prince Charming, in *Shrek 2*, on him. Paul Whitehouse's character, the 13th Duke of Wybourne, from *The Fast Show* was also modelled on Thomas.

Vadrouille (1966) where he plays a downed RAF pilot, *Dorellik* (1967) in which he essays the commander of Scotland Yard and Jess Franco's *Danger: Diabolik* (1968), the cult favourite which enabled Terry to turn his cad act up to 11 as the conniving minister of the interior.

In demand in Britain, America and on the continent, life was exceptionally good for Terry-Thomas in the late 1960s and early 1970s. His credits from this era include *Monte Carlo or Bust!* (1969's sort-of sequel to *Those Magnificent Man in their Flying Machines* which was green-lit purely because of Terry's performance in the earlier film), the Vincent Price *Dr Phibes* pictures and Disney's *Robin Hood* where he excels as that most slippery of customers, Sir Hiss. Life really couldn't have been much better, which as those familiar with existence will be aware, is where things started to go wrong.

In the case of Terry-Thomas, misfortune took the form of Parkinson's disease. As an actor famed for his range of expressions, it must have been particularly gruelling for Terry when he began to lose the elasticity in his facial muscles. Check out the Amicus portmanteau movie *The Vault Of Horror* (1973) and you'll notice how Thomas's face has the become somewhat mask-like. By the time he appeared in Pete and Dud's *The Hound Of The Baskervilles* (1977) and Marty Feldman's *The Last Remake Of Beau Geste* (1978), the condition was in danger of compromising his performances.

All but unable to work come the arrival of the 1980s, Terry-Thomas was obliged to sell his beloved villa to pay for his medical bills. His previous extravagance combined with the expense of combating the disease meant Terry and Belinda were reduced to living in an poorly-heated bedsit in south west London. It's hard to imagine an abode further removed from their Mediterranean idyll.

CLASSICS:
1 Poster for *Kill Or Cure* (1962)

2 *Blue Murder At St Trinian's*, poster (1957)

3 Terry-Thomas with Alastair Sim in *School For Scoundrels* (1960)
Photos: LMPC via Getty Images

In 1988, Terry's reduced circumstances were the subject of a particularly distressing *Thames News* report. Uncomfortable viewing even today, at least the press coverage encouraged his fellow actors to rally round him. Indeed, the likes of Lionel Jeffries, Jack Douglas, Michael Caine, Ronnie Corbett and Terry's cousin Richard Briers would arrange a benefit concert that raised over £70,000, enough money to ensure that, when the end came on January 8, 1990, Terry-Thomas was in a well-appointed Surrey care home rather than that ghastly, freezing flat.

There can be no compensation for the hardships Terry and Belinda Thomas endured in the wake of his Parkinson's diagnosis. However, there's no denying the admiration-filled afterlife that has been afforded the actor.

Besides Vic Reeves' enthusiasm for the bounder's bounder, you'll detect more than a whiff of Thomas magic about any number of Johnny Depp performances (he even has Terry-esque teeth in 2015's *Mortdecai*). And then there's *The Chap*, the gentlemen's periodical whose 100th issue featured Terry on the cover and saw editor Gustav Temple champion our man as "the greatest chap of all time".

And just how great a chap was he? Well, rather than hiding away from the world and his illness, Terry-Thomas appeared in a BBC documentary about the human brain in the hope that his participation might aid the research and treatment of Parkinson's disease. And the music that played as the coffin arrived at his funeral? Why, the theme from *Those Magnificent Men in their Flying Machines*, of course!

Terry-Thomas – he said the hyphen represented the gap in his teeth and he delighted in calling us "an absolute shower"! Would that his kind of toff was holding the reins today.

EXPERTISE

Mitch Benn

Comedian, Musician, Writer

IN PRAISE OF OUR INTERNATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE

CASE FOR IMMIGRATION: A&E staff at Wigan Infirmary, 2015
Photo: Getty Images

Before I begin, a quick heads-up: at about the 200-word mark of this column I'm going to say something which, at first glance, might look a *bit* racist. It's not. Keep reading. Okay? Okay. Here we go.

So last week we had one of those unexpected but ultimately minor and more or less benign interactions with the NHS which we, in this country, are fortunate enough to be able to rely upon.

I'm sure you know the drill: sudden mystery pain, tolerable but significant (and unexplained) enough to warrant investigation; into the GP, probably nothing serious but take some of these and if it gets any worse go to A&E; got worse, into A&E.

One always steels oneself for a lengthy wait in A&E but as it was, the whole process of registration, examination, referral, consultation, diagnosis and prescription was over and done with in four hours. And, of course, as always, the total billable cost was £0.00.

Something which occurred to me on the way home was this (yes, here comes the 'might look a bit racist' section, but keep reading): with the exception of the remarkably cheerful ladies on the front desk at A&E, all the NHS staff I'd met that day, from the GP to the nurse who took the blood samples, to the triage nurses at reception to the radiographer to the porters and examining physicians in the emergency ward, not one of them was what you'd call 'white British' (yep, that was it, bear with me, it goes on a little longer)... Every one of them either spoke with a pronounced accent and/or had dark skin (I know, it seems to be getting worse, trust me it'll be okay).

In other words, they were either all immigrants themselves or, at a guess, the children or grandchildren of relatively recent immigrants (nearly there, there's a point coming, I promise).

And that brought something home to me; something which is, in retrospect, glaringly obvious but had never seemed so clear before: Immigrants aren't overwhelming the NHS. Immigrants aren't a burden on the NHS. Immigrants aren't taking advantage of the NHS. Immigrants *are* the NHS.

The picture painted by the anti-immigration lobby of the relationship between the NHS and immigrants is not merely incorrect; it's the literal reverse of the truth. It's not about overworked British doctors and nurses being run ragged by the demands of foreign patients, it's the other way around.

And the only one of the foreign-born staff members who had time to chat – the nurse who took the blood samples, and whom I think was Spanish – told us that her 'settled status' was still pending. She'd been here 14 years, paying taxes but denied a vote, and had already shelled out £65 a few years back for her resident permit, now rescinded with no refund, of course.

Immigration isn't bleeding this country dry, it's keeping us alive – quite literally where the NHS is concerned. We've never been able to recruit enough indigenous qualified personnel to staff the NHS adequately and with our aging population that's only ever going to be the case.

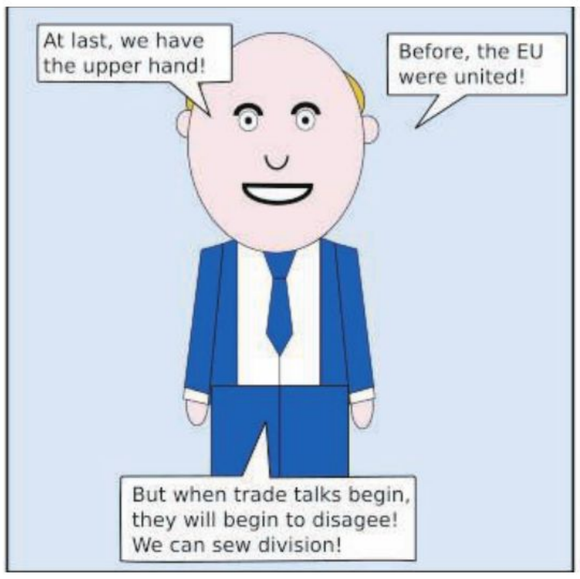
The idea trotted out by the Tiny Englanders that once we've purged ourselves of the interlopers we'll just "train up our own doctors" is simply a mathematical impossibility. Even if we could persuade enough high-scoring school leavers to enter the medical profession (which we've never been able to do) it would be seven years before they qualified as junior doctors, and many more years before any of them reached consultant level.

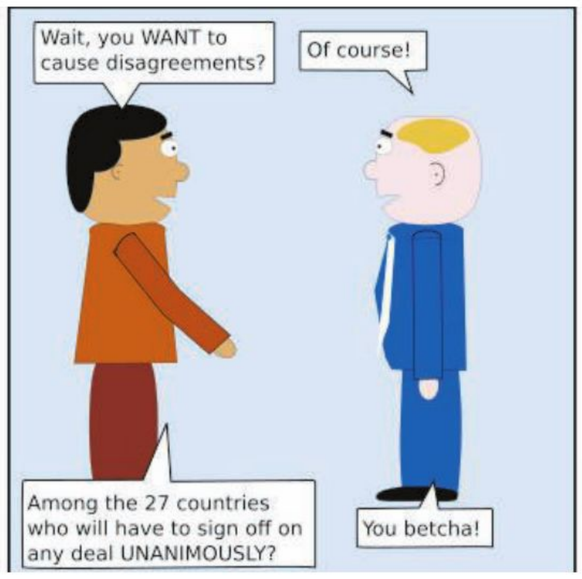
I bring this up because the whole political spectrum (including, depressingly, much of the currently rudderless Labour movement) seems to be lurching towards the decision that one must never challenge the entirely spurious notion that immigration is a drain on the country for fear of alienating 'economically anxious' voters.

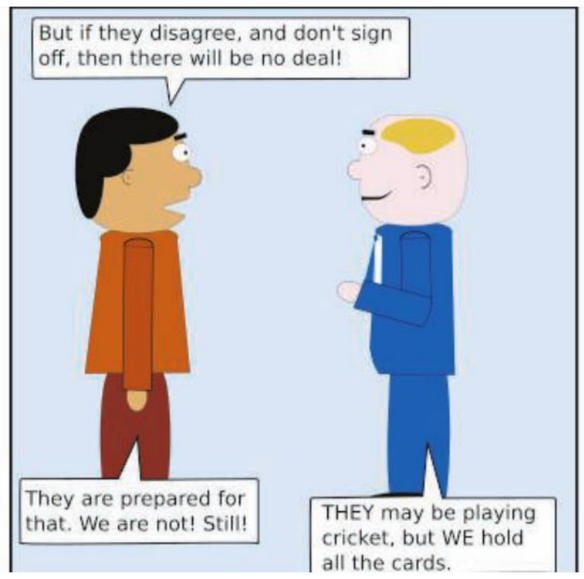
And this isn't just an ethical or philosophical issue; it's a practical one. The idea that one must always "address the people's concerns" even if those concerns are baseless is incredibly dangerous. If you set out to solve non-existent problems you create problems where none existed.

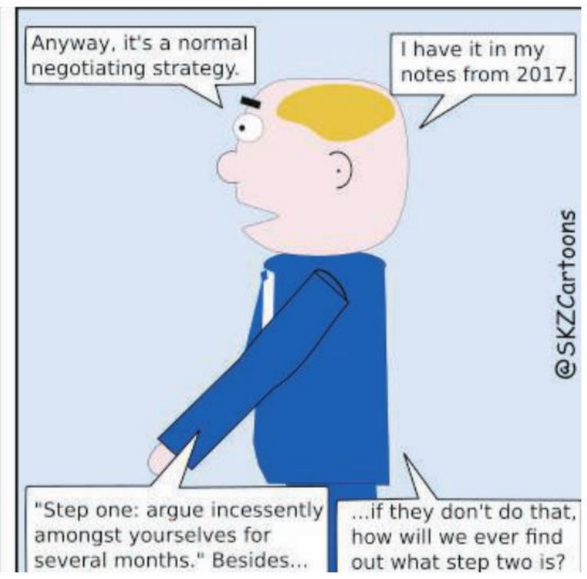
So there you go, that's something else our movement can turn its attention to: creating and promulgating the positive case *for* immigration. Not even in order to challenge the case against or tell people they're wrong; just to present the opposing argument.

Oh, and another thing: the aforementioned Spanish nurse seemed genuinely to take comfort from our conversation, to be reminded that some people – in fact I'd suggest *most* people in this country are glad she's here and will do what we can to help her stay. I'd suggest that's a conversation we should all have with the people in our lives who were born outside the UK. They're feeling kind of besieged right now and need to be reminded they're not alone.









EUROFILE

BORN STORYTELLER: Federico Fellini on the set of *Roma* (1972)
Photo: Getty Images

FORZA FED!

THE SERIES OF EVENTS MARKING THE CENTENARY OF FEDERICO FELLINI SHOWS HOW HIS EBULLIENT AND VIVID FILMS BELONG TO A DIFFERENT ERA, WHEN CINEMA DARED TO BE ART. JAMES OLIVER REPORTS

EUROFILE CINEMA

It says something about Federico Fellini that, when he died in 1993, the filmmaker's body was placed in a film studio to lie in state just like royalty. It says just as much about the Italian people that they came in droves to shuffle tearfully past his earthly remains, heads bowed in tribute. The spectacle, as many people noted at the time, was exactly like something from his films.

No director was more associated with that sort of outlandish pageantry, to the point that he even became an adjective ("Felliniesque – relating to, characteristic of, or reminiscent of Fellini, his films, or his style; often specifically: fantastic, bizarre; lavish, extravagant"). This talent for excess manifested itself in some of most important, influential and just plain greatest films ever made, an influence on Spielberg, Scorsese, on Tim Burton too.

We shouldn't need a reason to celebrate a great artist but this month offers a perfect excuse since it is his centenary, an anniversary being marked by a major retrospective at BFI Southbank, a UK-wide re-release of *La Dolce Vita*, and a tour of classic Fellini films to cinemas nationwide.

Federico Fellini arrived in this world on January 20, 1920, oldest child of a salesman. He was born and raised in the coastal resort of Rimini, a place he would return to – in his movies, at least – again and again, recreating a version of his younger life on screen.

But while he would later display tremendous nostalgia for the home town, when he was actually living there he couldn't wait to get away. Aged 18, he stepped on a train, first to Florence and then to Rome, to begin training as a lawyer.

Rome agreed with him immediately, its "gigantic rudeness and gigantic vulgarity" making him feel right at home. The law, though, did not and he dropped out from his course, scratching a living in journalism, that all purpose escape route for wastrels and ne'er-do-wells. Mussolini was in charge back then, and soon enough war would come but Fellini managed to avoid joining the army – his medical records were destroyed in a bombing raid, or so he claimed – and sat out the war on the home front.

He spent the duration working the showbiz beat, which gave him an excuse to go to the theatres and clubs he was attending anyway. It also took him to Cinecitta, the state-run film factory, to report on the escapism that the war-ravaged people needed so desperately. It was at Cinecitta that he became friendly with some film people. Sensing a born storyteller, one of them invited him to start contributing to a new project he was working on.

This, though, would not be escapism. Fellini's patron was a man called Roberto Rossellini and he wanted to do something different. Made almost immediately after the fascists and their Nazi allies had been flushed out of Rome in 1943, Rossellini's *Rome, Open City* told the truth about the brutality and cruelty of life during wartime.

Stripped of studio artifice and filmed on the streets, this was radically different to the glamour and glitz of commercial cinema. It proved enormously influential and other, similar, films soon followed:

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INFLUENTIAL:
1 Anthony Quinn and Federico Fellini's wife Giulietta Masina starred in the director's *La Strada* (1954)

2 Fellini, right, with brother Riccardo on the beach at Rimini in 1925

3 Poster for *La Strada*, the first of Fellini's movies to indulge his love of the circus

Photos: Getty Images / Wikipedia

3

EUROFILE CINEMA

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'neo-realism' ['new realism'] the critics called them.

Given his later fondness for the dressing up box, it's sometimes difficult to remember that Fellini was one of the most important figures in neo-realism. He contributed to some of the most important films of the cycle, including *Paisa* (for Rossellini) and *Without Pity* (directed by Alberto Lattuada).

But he was never as politically committed as some of the neo-realists, nor as dedicated to showing lives at the bottom of the heap. Fellini's first film, *Variety Lights*, (co-directed with Lattuada) was about a hapless travelling theatre troupe; his first solo effort, *The White Sheik*, concerns a frustrated woman who becomes a little too devoted to her favourite newspaper photo-romance (a genuine, and very popular, genre).

By the time of *I Vitelloni*, some critics were beginning to question Fellini's commitment to neo-realism. *I Vitelloni* (it translates as something like '*the veal calves*') is basically the younger Fellini's life story: four youthful friends mooching around a seaside town, trying to chat up girls and stave off boredom until one of them heads for the big city.

The neo-realist true believers were even more shocked by *La Strada* ('*The Road*'), the first of Fellini's films to indulge his life-long love of the circus, which would become a recurrent source of imagery thereafter.

It is the story of Gelsomina, an otherworldly young woman whose family sell her to a brute called Zampano (played by visiting American star Anthony Quinn). He tours rural Italy doing a strong man act with the bullied, put upon Gelsomina acting as clown/drudge.

Gelsomina was played by Giulietta Masina, Fellini's wife and most constant performer. They were wed in 1943, when she was a rising starlet and he a still-wet-behind-the-ears screenwriter and the marriage lasted until his death in 1993.

It was, though, a union that outsiders might struggle to understand, for Fellini was not only unfaithful, but everyone who saw his later work knew he was unfaithful: those movies are filled with very obvious stand-ins for the director having affairs (and, in fairness, feeling guilty). "The word marriage is not appropriate in our case," said Masina in one interview. "It would be better to speak of [...] two people who stay together by free choice." She added: "He is an Italian man".

Fellini's surrogates were usually played by the actor Marcello Mastroianni, who first worked with the director on *La Dolce Vita*; inspired by Italy's post-war economic miracle and the preponderance of Hollywood stars in Rome – financial advantages meant many productions were shot there at that time – Fellini's film is about a journalist (Mastroianni) who covers Fellini's old gig on the showbiz desk. Marcello has aspirations to be a serious writer, even an intellectual, but the temptations of easy pleasure, from orgies to starlets in fountains, keep getting in his way.

Upon first release in 1960, it was a *cause célèbre* for its decadence. The Vatican took against it for a start and there was much tut-tutting about the flagrant

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ERA-DEFINING:
1 Federico Fellini, right, and leading man Marcello Mastroianni with a poster for *La Dolce Vita* (1960)
Photo: David Lees/Corbis/VCG via Getty Images

2 Fellini directs actress Anita Ekberg during the shooting of *Boccaccio '70*, (1962)

3 Giulietta Masina and co-star Anthony Quinn in *La Strada* (1954)
Photos: Getty Images

immorality on display. It's rather less shocking 60 years on but don't think the film has dated. If anything, it's even more relevant, for Fellini predicted a culture deformed by an obsession with celebrity and trivia, the new gods of a godless age.

The combination of shock value, critical acclaim and papal disapproval made *La Dolce Vita* a huge, era-defining hit. Everyone was desperate to know what Fellini would do next. And that included Fellini because he didn't have a clue: he was suffering from an acute case of director's block.

Inspiration finally struck at Cinecitta, when a technician told him how much he was looking forward to the next Fellini flick. The director had heard that many times, but the technician added something else: it would be Fellini's eighth-and-a-half film, counting *Variety Lights* and a couple of shorts as fractions.

Suddenly everything clicked in to place. The resultant film – called *8½*, obviously – would be an account of a film director (called Guido Anselmo and played by Mastroianni) struggling to follow up an enormous success and distracting himself with affairs and other diversions. But this was more than simple autobiography: Fellini would interweave dreams, childhood memories and wild fantasies that would earn comparisons with James Joyce and *Ulysses*.

It's fair to say that nothing like this had been seen on screen before (it opens with Guido escaping from traffic gridlock by flying away) and it remains an overwhelming experience, at once exuberant and melancholic. It is obviously intensely personal film, and all the more compelling for it – the sequences between Guido and the wife who knows him only too well are very obviously drawn from life, as is the abundant self-pity. It is very 'Felliniesque' indeed.

And Fellini's films would become ever more 'Felliniesque' thereafter, especially after he moved from black and white to colour. This excess was too much for some, for whom the later films are bloated and self-indulgent.

Still, an exception can usually be made for *Amarcord*. This is Fellini's ultimate memory piece (the title derives from "*Mi ricordo*" ("I remember") in the local dialect of Rimini). It's set in an Italian seaside town in the 1930s and sees the director recalling the people and places of his youth with such warmth and generosity that it is near-impossible not to be moved.

Watching Fellini today can be a bittersweet experience. The films remain as wonderful as ever but it's impossible not to be aware that such things simply could not be made today. Fellini worked in a time when it was obvious that cinema was art.

Hell – he did quite a lot to prove it. But fewer people take movies so seriously these days; films are altogether more conservative now, tidy and polite. And that's surely the true value of these centenary celebrations; these films don't just to show what a great director Fellini was but what the medium is capable of in the right hands – and how spectacular that can be. *Grazie, Federico*.

■ A Fellini retrospective plays at the BFI Southbank throughout January. A re-release of *La Dolce Vita* will be screened around the country

EUROFILE FOOTBALL

A TALE OF

They might be fierce rivals, but Milan's football giants have plenty that unites them. **NEIL JENSEN** reports on their complex history

From Ferencváros to Feyenoord, modern football has left behind some of its big names of the past. But when it comes to clubs that once stood astride the European landscape, there are no bigger institutions among this band of fallen giants than AC Milan and their city rivals Internazionale.

Between them, the Italian pair have been European champions 10 times and have 36 league titles to their names. Yet, while Inter might be faring pretty well in Serie A this season, neither club has won any significant silverware for almost a decade and Italian football currently has just one team, Juventus, who can look Europe's elite in the eye.

The slump in fortunes has been hard to take, not least because both clubs have a bitter rivalry with Juventus (one wrapped up not just in football, but also the political, economic and cultural competition that exists between Turin and Milan) that is almost as great as the one that exists between each other.

For if there is much to divide AC Milan and Inter, there is also much that unites them, not least the stadium they have shared for decades. The two clubs have a deeply intertwined history, with one emerging as a splinter of the other, and their periods of success and failure have often mirrored one another. The recent barren decade endured by both underlines this point, but it goes back further. The pair have finished in the top two in Serie A six times and have ended the season in consecutive places a remarkable 26 times.

This curiously conjoined history doubtless makes the rivalry on the pitch and in the stands all the more intense. The so-called *Derby della Madonnina* – named after one of the city's principal attractions, the statue of the Virgin Mary which sits atop the Duomo – is among the fiercest in world football and historically one of the best matched.

Like many local rivalries, people try to inject some form of social or class differentiation between the two clubs involved. In truth, any such distinction has now evaporated. But it was there at the beginning. AC Milan's support was said to be primarily working class and it used to have a strong trade union influence.

Their blue collar background led to their first nickname, *Casciavit*, the screwdrivers. Milan, now more popularly known as the *Rossoneri* (literally, 'the Red and Blacks'), actually have English origins.

Established in 1899, they were a football and cricket association and adopted the English spelling of the city's name – Milan, and not the Italian Milano. Mussolini's regime forced the club to change, although it later switched back.

Inter, meanwhile, were founded in 1908,

BITTER RIVALS: AC Milan fans show their support during a Serie A clash with Inter at the San Siro in 2010

TWO CLUBS

Photo: Getty Images

becoming a breakaway club from AC Milan following the death of the club's influential Nottingham-born founder Herbert Kilpin. The split was precipitated by a disagreement over the acceptance of foreign players – some AC Milan members wanted the club to be more Italian-centric. The result was that eight members, all Swiss, helped to form Internazionale, the very name indicating its different approach to AC.

From its beginnings, then, Inter had a more cosmopolitan reputation and became associated with a more well-heeled audience. In its early days, the side was nicknamed *bauscia*, a Milanese term meaning 'braggart' to reflect their supposed snooty, bourgeois credentials.

During the Fascist period, the club was forced to merge with Union Sportiva – Milan was one of the hotbeds of support for Mussolini, who used football as an effective propaganda tool for the masses.

After the war, the two teams began their cohabitation at the San Siro, when Inter moved in, in 1947. (They had previously played in the vast, crumbling, neoclassical Arena Civica, still used by Milan's third team, Brera Calcio).

The San Siro had been AC's home since its construction in 1926 (its inaugural match was a clash with Inter, who triumphed 6-3). It took its name from the surrounding neighbourhood, just to the north-west of the city centre, which also features a horse-racing track, which still exists and which was owned by the AC Milan president.

When the club had the stadium built, its design differed significantly from other Italian football grounds – which were mostly built with public funds – in that it did not incorporate a running track around the pitch.

The switch to ground-sharing intensified the rivalry, which emphasised the contrasting social backgrounds of the club's fans. Inter supporters became known as *motoretta*, as they were able to travel to the ground on motorscooters, while their AC counterparts – *tramvees* – had to rely on public transport.

It was during this early post-war period that Italian clubs took a lead in becoming increasingly professional. Both Milan clubs were at the forefront of this and became leading exponents of the infamous ultra-defensive and often strong-armed approach known as *catenaccio,* which translated to the rather ominous 'door bolt'.

This often notorious style, which actually originated in Switzerland, was largely pioneered by two domineering Milanese managers in Nereo Rocco of AC and Inter's somewhat mysterious Helenio Herrera.

Through connections in the UK, notably the popular 'Mr Fix-it', Gigi Peronace (the man described as England's first real football agent), Italian clubs started to sign British players, although the demands and regimentation, not to mention the invasive media, proved too much for them. *Catenaccio*, for a while, dominated Europe, with Milan (1963) and Inter (1964 and 1965) ending the Real Madrid stranglehold on the European Cup.

Inter, in particular, had a golden period that earned them the title, Grande Inter, with a team that included all-time greats Giacinto Facchetti and Sandro Mazzola.

A more expansive style was to succeed

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EUROFILE FOOTBALL

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the cautious and cynical tactics of the Italian clubs but it was not until the late 1980s that a new generation of coaches and players took AC Milan and Inter back to the very top.

In the case of AC Milan, the arrival of the controversial Silvio Berlusconi in 1986 transformed their fortunes and gave them a huge advantage over their rivals. Berlusconi put Milan on a different commercial plane to the rest of Serie A and brought a host of international stars to the San Siro, including the Dutch trio of Ruud Gullit, Marco van Basten and Frank Rijkaard.

With a new coach, Arrigo Saachi, appointed in 1987, Milan played inventive and exciting football, winning two European Cups in 1989 and 1990.

Milan's multi-national team, along with Diego Maradona at Napoli, were the faces of a glamorous, carnival-like Serie A. Inter, too, grasped the opportunity and with a German-orientated team, won the title in 1989. In 1995, the club got its own high-spending owner, in the form of petroleum tycoon Massimo Moratti. The two clubs competed with each other – and Juventus – to be the most glamorous and successful during a golden period for Italian football. Milan's 1994 Champions League win, an era-defining 4-0 victory against a strong Barcelona team, appeared to be the zenith of their achievements.

In some ways, the Milan sides' cosmopolitan all-star line-ups provided a blueprint for the Premier League in England. While Italy's domestic competition started to decline in the 21st century, partly due to a series of scandals, but also because of increased competition, England's Premier League became the go-to competition in Europe.

The signs that the Milan clubs and Italy's other leading sides were losing their appeal, and their financial clout, became evident when rivals from other countries started to lure players away, such as Zlatan Ibrahimovic and Thiago Silva who moved from AC Milan to the emerging Paris Saint-Germain in the summer of 2012. In the past, such a move would have been almost unthinkable.

The financial crisis of 2008 had a big impact on Italy and its economy, so given most clubs were owned by Italian families or wealthy individuals, it was inevitable they would be affected.

Both Milan giants hung onto players for too long and struggled to replace ageing squads. The timing of their decline and lack of investment was unfortunate. In an age of increasing broadcasting fees and new, extraordinarily wealthy owners, AC Milan and Inter, along with most Italian clubs, could no longer compete with the new European elite. The evolving landscape was effectively relegating Italy from the very top bracket.

Berlusconi stayed with AC Milan until 2017, by which time his wealth had been significantly eroded. He sold the club to Chinese investors, but in a complicated chain of events, a private equity firm, Elliott Management, now owns AC Milan. Inter have also moved on from their links with the past, the Moratti family finally selling its complete holding in the club in 2016 to Indonesian businessman Erick Thohir. Angelo Moratti had been chairman between 1955 and 1968 and his son, Massimo, filled that role from 1995 to 2013, spending almost 1.5 billion euros of his money in the transfer market. The club is now majority-owned by Chinese holding company Suning, the owner of which, Zhang Jindong, is now chairman of Inter.

Of the two, Inter would seem to have the brightest near-term future. They recently announced record revenues and they remain the biggest spectator draw in Italy with almost 60,000 people turning up for their home games at the San Siro. They also have serial winner Antonio Conte as their coach and they've matched their ambition to become a credible challenger to Juventus with a number of high profile signings in the summer of 2019.

AC Milan are also under new management and have retained their support. The much-travelled Marco Giampaolo joined the club as coach in June 2019, replacing Gennaro Gattuso, but by October he had been replaced by Stefano Pioli. After recently running into Financial Fair Play problems, AC Milan spent around 100 million euros to strengthen their squad, but it has been a difficult campaign. Inter and AC Milan have already met this season and Inter ran out 2-0 winners. At this early stage, Juventus will be more wary of the blue and black half of the San Siro.

One major part of the route back to pre-eminence for both clubs is a proposed move to a new stadium – one which they will continue to share.

Although AC Milan built the San Siro, they sold it to the local council in 1935. Municipal-owned stadiums are common in Italy, but this model of ownership means the sites are often under-utilised, with limited commercial scope.

The San Siro – also known as the Giuseppe Meazza in honour of an Inter legend, who also played, briefly, for AC – has been one of world football's great venues and a cutting-edge one for much of its life. But it now looking increasingly tired.

It has undergone various alterations through the decades, including for the 1990 World Cup. This involved the construction of 11 concrete towers around the outside, four of are located at the corners, supporting a new roof, with distinctive protruding red girders. At one point, its capacity was increased to 100,000, but it is currently 80,000 – still the largest in Italy.

Under plans now being discussed, a new stadium will be built in the same area (though with a reduced 60,000 capacity). The design has yet to be decided upon, but after lengthy discussions, the wheels are now turning. Whether it will give these peculiarly inter-connected clubs the impetus they need to return them to European football's elite remains to be seen.

PROUD HISTORY:
1 Inter Milan players and fans celebrate winning the Serie A title at the San Siro on May 11, 1980

2 Brazilian winger Jair salutes a goal for Inter Milan against visiting Juventus, 1962

3 The San Siro, 1965

Photo: Getty Images

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IMPORTS: England internationals Mark Hateley and Ray Wilkins, right, were among the big names bought by AC Milan in the 1980s Photo: Getty Images

BRITS ABROAD

While Inter was established with a greater focus on foreign players, it is AC Milan which has a more extensive history when it comes to recruiting British footballers.

Jimmy Greaves spent a turbulent spell with the side in 1961 which got off to a bad start when the manager who had signed him suffered a heart attack before he arrived.

The replacement was the disciplinarian Nereo Rocco, who had an uneasy relationship with Greaves, who was used to a more relaxed approach. During a match against Sampdoria, Greaves kicked a player who had spat in his face. Sampdoria equalised from the resulting free-kick, for which Rocco blamed Greaves, despite him having scored Milan's opener and set up the second.

While Greaves was at Milan, fellow Englishman Gerry Hitchens was at Inter. Both initially found it difficult to settle in the city and the two would sneak out of their training camps for drinks at a local Milanese train station.

But while Greaves never fully adapted, Hitchens eventually felt at home in Italy, and ended up playing in the country for almost a decade. He was Inter's top scorer in his first season, with 16 goals, earning the nicknames Il Cannone (the Cannon) and Il Principe del Gioco del Calcio (the Prince of Football) from the Milanese press. He was picked for the 1962 World Cup, becoming the first Englishman to represent his country while playing abroad.

However, when Alf Ramsey took over as England manager, Hitchens' international spell came to a halt, Ramsey preferring to pick home-based players. Hitchens stayed in Italy, however, also playing for Torino, Atalanta and Cagliari.

Both Milan clubs steered clear of Brits for a few decades. In the 1980s, though, AC went on something of a recruitment spree, signing England trio Mark Hateley, Ray Wilkins and Luther Blissett and Scot Joe Jordan. The players' fortunes varied.

Blissett's spell at the San Siro was unsuccessful – he scored just five goals in 30 appearances – but it remains one of football's most discussed transfers because of the suggestion the club had actually intended to sign his Watford teammate, John Barnes, and the fact that Blisset was later adopted as a figurehead for a group of Italian anarchists, who took his name as their own.

Hateley's time at the San Siro was marred by injuries, yet he is remembered fondly for his winning goal in a 2–1 victory over Inter in 1984 – the club's first derby win for six years.

More recently, David Beckham spent two loan periods with Milan, while signed to LA Galaxy, towards the end of his career. His spell in Milan included appearances against his old side Manchester United.

Another former Man Utd favourite to end up in Milan was Paul Ince – who was sold to Inter in 1995 as part of a clear-out of big-name players to make way for Beckham and other emerging young stars. He spent two seasons at the San Siro before turning down a new contract to return to England for family reasons.

Irishman Robbie Keane signed for Inter in 2000. Like Greaves at AC Milan, however, he suffered from a change in management. Keane had been signed by Marcello Lippi, who was then sacked. His replacement deemed Keane surplus to requirements.

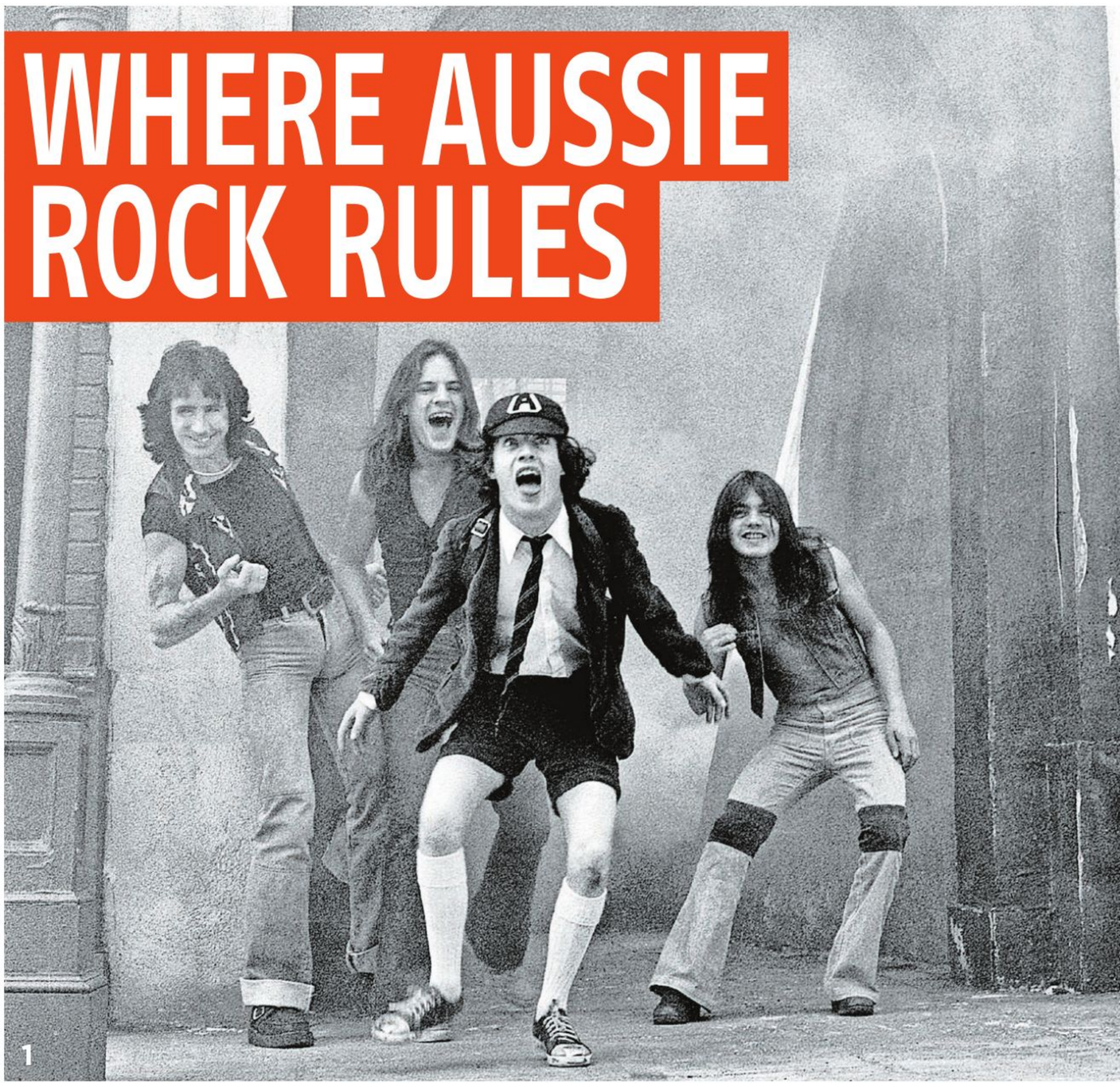
EUROFILE MUSIC

Sydney

A CITY IN MUSIC

The city's legendarily sweaty pub circuit has produced some unforgettable rock sounds, some macho, some political, some sentimental. **SOPHIA DEBOICK** reports

WHERE AUSSIE ROCK RULES



For thousands for years, Sydney was the dominion of the Eora nation, but it took only 100 years for that to be irrevocably changed and for the rich musical culture of indigenous Australians to be supplanted by British melodies. With the arrival of Captain Cook at Botany Bay in 1770, and the 11 British convict ships of the First Fleet at Sydney Cove eight years later, came not just an alien culture but smallpox, which decimated the native population. A prison settlement rapidly became a city, as it attracted free settlers, and a goldrush in the 1850s profoundly shaped a place that was already earning a reputation as a party city. The tragedy of Australia's indigenous peoples and its colonial past hangs heavy over the country's history even into the 21st century, but since the 1970s, music has been a key ambassador for a country that hasn't let stereotyping or geographical remoteness stop it presenting its unique character to the rest of the world.

While the Sydney Opera House is probably the most recognisable music venue in the world, Sydney's musical soul was forged in its legendarily sweaty and unforgiving pub circuit in the rock era, and it was there that Australia's most successful act emerged in the 1970s. Malcolm and Angus Young had gone to Sydney in the 1960s as children, escaping the rundown tenements of Glasgow via the Australian government's Assisted Passage Migration Scheme. Settling with their parents and four other siblings in the western Sydney suburb of Burwood, Angus and Malcolm formed a band with their brother George and his friend Harry Vanda. George and Harry had already tasted musical success via The Easybeats, whose hyperactive 1966 single ***Friday on my Mind*** became a mod anthem. But when Angus and Malcolm formed a glam rock outfit, AC/DC, in 1973, they would go on to unimaginable success.

AC/DC were destined for iconicity from the start. Angus, just 18 and a little over 5ft tall, famously adopted his uniform from Ashfield Boys High School, east of Burwood, as a stage outfit (complete with satchel), giving the band instant recognisability, and at venues like the Bondi Lifesaver, near Bondi Beach, they picked up a ferocious live reputation.

They quickly moved on to grander Sydney venues like Jools on central Crown Street, and the nearby Chequers, both clubs which drew international acts. AC/DC took on fellow Scot, rock powerhouse Bon Scott, as singer in 1974, and they would record their first six albums at Albert Studios in the heart of Sydney before 1980's watershed *Back in Black*. Recorded in the Bahamas, it was the band's first LP without Bon Scott after his untimely death earlier that year. The album is second only to *Thriller* in terms of sales, and as one of the pillars of hard rock, AC/DC have sold more than 200 million albums worldwide.

Sydney bands would make several successful assaults on the pop charts as the 1980s got into gear. In early 1983, David Bowie had set the tone by putting Sydney all over MTV via the video for *Let's Dance*, which used aboriginal rights for its theme and made a panoramic shot of Sydney Harbour its dénouement (the Victorian Strand Arcade and Broadway, one the first streets built in the city, also featured). The same year, INXS made their first moves towards international prominence. The Perth-born Farriss brothers were living in the northern Sydney suburb of Belrose when Tim Farriss met saxophonist Kirk Pengilly at Forest High School, forming a band they called Guinness, while the native Sydneysiders, bassist Garry Gary Beers and singer Michael Hutchence, formed Doctor Dolphin after the latter met Andrew Farriss at nearby Davidson High.

In August 1977 INXS played their first gig – a house party on Whale Beach Road on Sydney's northern peninsula for Andrew's 20th birthday. Plenty of hard gigging around the city and beyond followed, the band developing a strong domestic following, but a signing with Atlantic and Polygram in 1982 promised success beyond Australian shores.

INXS's new wavey single ***The One Thing*** scraped the US Top 30 in May 1983, and the sophisticated pop of ***Original Sin*** followed the next year. The single was recorded in New York with Nile Rogers on

AUSSIE ICONS: **1** AC/DC at London's Shepperton Studio, 1976. From left, Bon Scott, Mark Evans, Angus Young, Malcolm Young and Phil Rudd

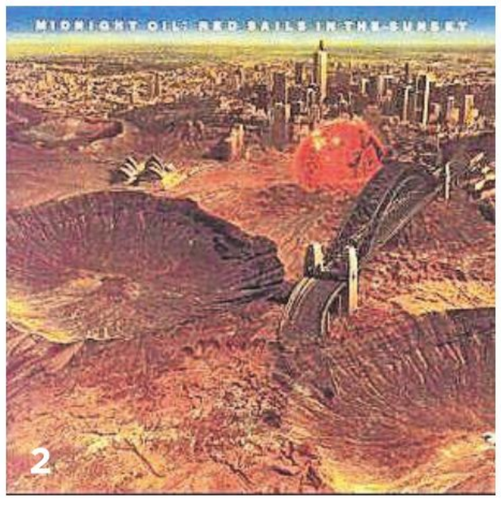
Photo: Getty Images

2 Midnight Oil's *Red Sails in the Sunset* (1984) was the band's first No. 1 album

Photo: Wikipedia

A CONVICT CHORUS

Songs of the transportation era are a link to Australia's brutal past, telling of separation from home, the perils of the sea, and sometimes also of the opportunities of the new world. Many such songs are preserved as broadside ballads, the tabloids of their day, which included news told as songs. *Botany Bay Scoundrels*, for example, a song from around 1790 describing the "whores, pimps and bastards" populating the Sydney coast, is preserved on a single sheet in Sydney's State Library of New South Wales.



NOW LISTEN TO THE MUSIC...

Find the accompanying playlist on Spotify. Just search

NEW EUROPEAN: SYDNEY

Featuring:

Botany Bay
John Greenway

Highway to Hell
AC/DC

Original Sin
INXS

Suddenly
Angry Anderson

production, fresh from working on *Let's Dance*, and Daryl Hall on backing vocals. It would be their first and only home No.1 and got halfway down the Billboard Hot 100, but 1987's *Kick*, their sixth album, saw them definitively make their international crossover.

Kick was made for the 1980s – high energy, sexy, slick rock-pop delivered by a frontman of matchless charisma. The video collage promo for the album's lead single, ***Need You Tonight***, got them noticed and the song reached US No.1 in January 1988, while subsequent singles ***Devil Inside***, ***New Sensation*** and ***Never Tear Us Apart*** reached 2, 3 and 7, respectively.

Need You Tonight was only kept off the top in the UK by Robin Beck's Coca Cola ad power ballad, *First Time*, and while the subsequent three singles didn't break the Top 20, the swaggering ***Mystify*** made No.14. With *Crocodile Dundee* (1986) having just fixed a vulgar stereotype of antipodean masculinity in the minds of foreign audiences, INXS proved that pop cool wasn't incompatible with having an Australian passport.

INXS's pivotal album *The Swing* (1984) had been produced by British post-punk supremo Nick Launay, and he had come to working with them directly from another essential Sydney band. Midnight Oil's *Red Sails in the Sunset* (1984), their first Australian No.1 album, bore a cover showing an emptied, cratered Sydney Harbour after a nuclear strike.

The same year, frontman Peter Garrett had stood as a senate candidate for the Nuclear Disarmament Party, later becoming a Labor member of parliament and minister under Kevin Rudd and Julia Gillard – unsurprisingly, the band were among the most overtly political ever. The imposing presence of the 6ft 4in, bald-headed Garrett, and his frenetic live performance style, had seen the band build a strong local fanbase after they formed in the late 1970s, performing at venues like the Royal Antler at the Narrabeen beachside suburb, and the Bondi Lifesaver, but they would have to wait until the late 1980s for international recognition.

Midnight Oil's *Diesel and Dust* (1987) was a concept album deeply invested in Australian concerns, including the plight of indigenous Australians and threats to the environment. Its standout single, ***Beds Are Burning***, brought attention to Aboriginal land rights ("The time has come, a fact's a fact/ It belongs to them, let's give it back") and would be an international hit in 1988, pushing the band well beyond local cult status.

That year another alumnus of Sydney's pub circuit also had an unlikely hit. The hard rock of Rose Tattoo had been of rare influence, adopted with a vengeance by the LA hair metal scene, with their 1978 album track ***Nice Boys*** notably covered by Guns 'n' Roses. But in 1988, Rose Tattoo frontman Angry Anderson changed gear with the sentimental power ballad ***Suddenly***, which got far more cut-through than the band had ever achieved when it soundtracked Scott and Charlene's wedding on the Melbourne-set and filmed *Neighbours*. It became one of the defining songs of the year.

In the 2000s, uncompromising garage rock exploded out of Sydney to reach international acclaim. Wolfmother – whose ***The Joker and the Thief*** from their eponymous 2005 debut, released on Sydney label Modular, brought them to prominence – had played their first gig at the Vic on the Park pub in the western suburb of Marrickville. The Vines – whose ***Get Free*** was a minor hit in 2002, debut album *Highly Evolved* garnering critical acclaim – met while working at a McDonalds in Sydney's South Hurstville in 1994.

More recently, the boy band looks and teen-baiting songs of 5 Seconds of Summer, formed in the Sydney suburbs and bolstered by a One Direction support slot, have had wild success. They've topped the Australian and UK singles charts, also breaking records for album sales for an Australian act in the US.

As fire engulfs New South Wales and Sydney chokes on smoke, Midnight Oil turn out to have been prophetic in their environmental activism, and, appropriately, *Beds Are Burning* was recorded by musicians around the world to signal their support for climate justice on the occasion of the 2009 United Nations Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen. Musicians are joining the call to arms in the fight against the bushfires. Queen and Alice Cooper will play the Fire Fight Australia bushfire benefit concert at Sydney's ANZ Stadium in February. Even the Wiggles, the musical children's entertainment phenomenon formed by teaching trainees at Macquarie University in the early 1990s, are reassembling their original line up for an Australian Red Cross and WIRES fundraising concert. Australia looks like it is once again being remade. And once again, music will be the interpreter of change.

STAGE REVIEW BY TIM WALKER

A PLAY SHOWS ITS AGE

Coming Clean

Trafalgar Studios, London, until February 1

★★★☆☆

If there's one actress it's always enlightening to interview, it's Dame Eileen Atkins. "Infidelity," she told me, "is one of the last things you should fall out with someone over."

That's not the *modus vivendi* agreed by Tony (Lee Knight) and Greg (Jason Nwoga), who allow each other the odd one-night stand, but only on condition it must never become a two – or more – night stand. Discretion is also mandatory. Their relationship is thus imperilled when they employ an out-of-work actor named Robert (Jonah Rzeskiewicz) as their cleaner, and Greg becomes irresistibly attracted to him.

I need hardly point out that *Coming Clean* is another gay play from Kevin Elyot – it was written before his best-known work, *My Night With Reg* – but the problems of relationships are, of course, universal. The love triangle depicted here isn't so very different from the one that involved Celia Johnson, Trevor Howard and Cyril Raymond in the old film classic *Brief Encounter*.

Just as in the film, Tony and Greg's relationship at the outset seems, on the face of it, idyllic, but the arrival of an attractive interloper is used to put the case that "monogamy isn't natural". In the most interesting role as the catalyst for change, Rzeskiewicz excels: his clandestine grin when Tony discovers him and Greg *in flagrante delicto* is artfully conceived.

Nwoga also acquits himself well as Greg: he is allowed at least to give a restrained, thoughtful performance in a production that calls too often for emotion, if not wearying hysteria.

The director Adam Spreadbury-Maher adroitly evokes the spirit of what now seems like the carefree early 1980s – when no one had heard of Aids and it was still possible to have a Michael Jackson poster up on the wall – but that only adds to the sense that this is a time capsule of a production.

Its full-frontal male nudity and gay sex scenes aren't now remotely shocking to seasoned theatre-goers, and so, almost 40 years after it was written, it has only its plot and characterisation to fall back upon.

The plot, quite honestly, doesn't take us one step forward from *Brief Encounter*, and, while very well acted by the whole ensemble, the lines the actors have to come out with make it difficult to care very much about any of them.

A lot of it simply hasn't been thought through: Robert explains at length at the start of the play that he's a young actor desperate to find work, but, when he finally lands a part, he let's it slip almost casually and it doesn't seem to matter at all to him. Is it likely, too, a couple in such a small flat in Kentish Town would employ a cleaner? Elliot Hadley's neighbour William, meanwhile, seems so determinedly camp it's hard not to see him as a something of a stereotype.

Maybe the real message here isn't that love triangles make for unhappiness, but plays written with the sole intention to shock can, several decades on, start to appear very threadbare indeed.

THREADBARE: Greg (Jason Nwoga), Robert (Jonah Rzeskiewicz) and Tony (Lee Knight) in *Coming Clean* Photo: Ali Wright

EUROFILE BOOKS

THE AUTHOR WHO SHOULD COME

CHARLIE CONNELLY on a little-known writer – and his greatest work – for whom time in the spotlight is long overdue

We'll be hearing plenty this year about some high-profile anniversaries. That fevered scratching and tapping you can hear? It's the sound of hundreds of documentary makers frantically completing projects marking events such as 400 years since the Mayflower arrived at Cape Cod, 500 since Raphael handed in his palette and brushes and the 250th birthdays of Beethoven and Wordsworth.

It's also 50 years since the death of a man whose anniversary in March will pass comfortably below the radar, certainly here, when he deserves a much more assertive legacy outside his native Norway.

Tarjei Vesaas was the finest Norwegian writer of the 20th century and remains a strong contender for the greatest the country has ever produced. Over a career that spanned five decades he created some of the best and most thought-provoking European fiction of the modern age, leading to strong consideration for the Nobel Prize on three occasions during the 1960s.

He wouldn't have minded not winning in the slightest, spending almost his entire life squirreled away on the family farm in the wilds of the Telemark region of southern Norway absolutely content with being out of the spotlight. "I should like to be unknown," he said on a 1968 visit to London a couple of years before his death.

If there's any kind of literary justice – and let's face it recent events seem to indicate most forms of justice have stepped off the planet for a bit – 2020 will see Vesaas receive some of the wider attention he neither achieved nor desired during his lifetime but unquestionably deserved.

It was his 1963 novel *The Ice Palace* that became his most enduring legacy, a novel that explored Vesaas' favourite themes of loneliness, guilt and isolation. Even though it's a short book, *The Ice Palace*'s tale of a deep friendship between two 11-year-old girls ruptured in heartrending circumstances distilled everything he'd ever tried to achieve into barely 140 pages, producing one of the most powerful and haunting works of fiction of the 20th century.

"How simple this novel is," wrote Doris Lessing in a 1993 newspaper review. "How subtle. How strong. How unlike any other. It is unique. It is unforgettable. It is extraordinary."

Vesaas was the eldest child of a family that had farmed the same land and lived in the same house for more than three centuries. While he had no desire to take on the running of the farm, other than a

IN FROM THE COLD

period of travelling in Europe in the 1920s he lived his entire life in the house in which he was born. The landscape there comforted, daunted and inspired him to become much more than a mere setting for his work and almost a character in its own right.

The land is a brooding, faintly sinister presence in Vesaas's writing and in this there is much in common with current Scandinavian noir television series and the English folk horror genre currently enjoying a renaissance. Vesaas's landscape is unshakably Norwegian with its fjords, forests and rivers and the long nights of its icy winters creating shadows and mystery in a nation where the land has played a stronger role than most in forging a national culture and character.

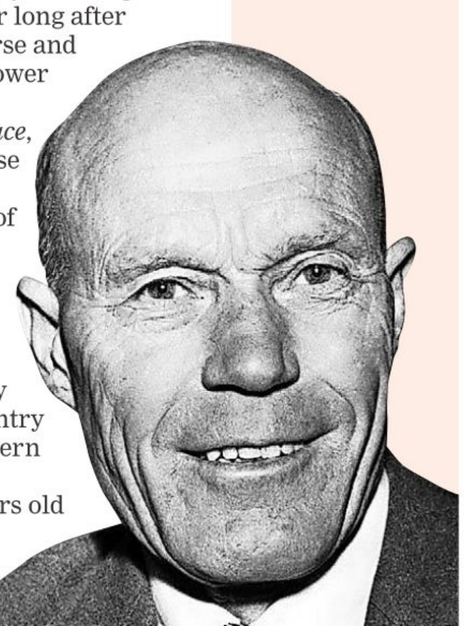
His first short stories were published in periodicals from the mid-1920s but Vesaas saw his first significant success with his 1934 novel *Det Store Spelet* (*The Great Cycle*) and the following year's *Kvinner Ropar Heim* (*Women Call Home*), portraying life on a remote Norwegian farm. The former in particular, about the eldest son in a farming family rebelling against the assumption he would take over the farm on his father's death, contains a strong streak of autobiography.

The German invasion of Norway had a profound and lasting influence on Vesaas' work, inspiring *Kimen* (*The Seed*) in 1940, which set out how hatred could be harnessed and propagated by evil doctrines and *Huset i Mørkret* (*House in Darkness*), published just after the war. This was a perceptive allegory for the Nazi occupation and a deep rumination on the nature of evil: the house of the title is besieged by sinister forces called 'the Arrow people', a story detailed in a manuscript Vesaas wrote during the war and buried in the earth near the farm to keep it from prying occupier eyes.

In 1952 came the short story collection *Vindane* (*The Winds*) which won the Venice Literary Prize and in 1957 he produced *Fuglane* (*The Birds*), a novel of great depth about a man with learning difficulties and his relationship with the sister who looks after him in a book that was regarded, until *The Ice Palace*, as his finest work.

Rarely can such power, such impact, have been distilled into a short novel as *The Ice Palace*. It's a deeply affecting book that stays with the reader long after they've closed it. It's sparse and bleak and such are the power and universal themes contained in *The Ice Palace*, and so perceptive is its use of landscape, displacement and depth of characterisation that it could feasibly have been written by a novelist firmly of the 21st century.

The book opens shortly after the arrival in a country town of Unn, one of modern literature's most tragic characters. Unn is 11 years old and has arrived in the unnamed town at the start of winter following the death of her mother earlier in the year.



FAR FROM LIMELIGHT: Tarjei Vesaas
Photo: Contributed

She never knew her father and has no other family than the kindly aunt who takes her in. Attending the local school, where she knows nobody, she remains aloof in her displacement until it's clear there is a nascent bond with Siss, the most popular girl in the class and the very antithesis of Unn. From a stable family and well-liked at school as well as in the wider community, Siss is gregarious and kind, but something seems to bind the two girls together despite the enigmatic singularity of Unn.

When the new girl invites Siss back to her aunt's house after school there is a brilliantly realised scene of great awkwardness, capturing perfectly the early hours of a friendship with its cluster of clumsy misunderstandings and excitement of shared enthusiasms.

Yet Unn, it becomes clear, has a secret. A dark one.

"I'm not sure I'll go to heaven," she tells Siss, as she tries to find the courage to reveal it. The bond between the girls has made it clear to Unn that Siss is the right, possibly only person with whom she can share her burden, but the ham-fisted, hesitant way she goes about it prompts an uncomfortable Siss to leave before the secret can be revealed. The girls will never see each other again.

The next day, anxious about the previous night's events, Unn plays truant from school. She'd heard about a forthcoming outing to the local frozen river and decides to see it for herself, alone. She comes across what the local children call the ice palace, a frozen waterfall whose fissures turn the stilled cascade into a suite of otherworldly rooms, each bathed in a different light and giving off different sounds, some hissing with the freezing of the water, some echoing Unn's voice back to her when she calls out, others in which the roar of the water still tumbling over the precipice around the ice palace can be heard. Captivated by the structure Unn explores deep inside, but without her warm coat on is soon overcome by the cold.

For the rest of the book and for the rest of that winter we follow Siss's psychological journey through disbelief, fear, guilt and grief as the realisation slowly dawns on her and the community that Unn is not coming back. Siss joins the search party that ventures out on the night of the disappearance, a spread of swinging lantern specks in the darkness that comes agonisingly close to locating the missing girl in the ice. She fields the insistent enquiries that Unn must have said something to her that might give a clue to her whereabouts, feels guilty that she has no answer and at one point when she sits under a tree on her own is even mistaken for the missing girl by one of the searchers.

The Ice Palace is a book layered with mysteries, some of which the reader is a party to, some not. There's the mystery of Unn's whereabouts, the mystery of her secret, the mystery of the bond that was instantly if briefly forged between the two girls, the mystery of Unn's absent father and the mystery of the death of her mother, the cause of which is never revealed.

There are mysteries of things left unsaid, the spaces between conversations and relationships, as well as the physical spaces: the forest, the fjords and most of all the magical and terrifying presence of ice; the explosions in the night that signify its shifting movements and the extraordinary palace of ice that lies at the very heart of the story.

As with most of his fiction Vesaas grapples with the ultimate mystery of the human condition but he does it concisely, intelligently and eloquently. "Everything was and wasn't how it should be," he writes of Unn's continued absence towards the end of *The Ice Palace*. There's not a spare word and even though we know Unn's fate almost from the start the book draws the reader in spellbound until the last page. No wonder Peter Owen, who first published Vesaas in English translation, called it "the best novel I ever published".

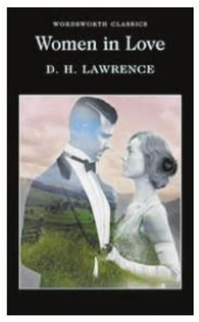
Tarjei Vesaas was as unassuming as he was brilliant, living quietly at Midtbø Farm with his wife the acclaimed poet Halldis Moren Vesaas. When *The Ice Palace* won the Nordic Council Literature Prize he donated the money to found an annual prize for young writers. When asked towards the end of his life about his next book he said he was not planning one, indeed he never planned one.

"Every time I finish a book I believe it will be my last," he said.

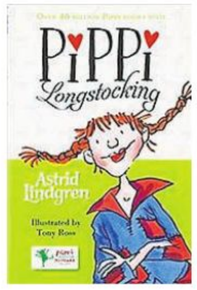
Yet living out there in the relentless darkness of the rural Norwegian winters he must have felt as close as it was possible to be to the music of the spheres that offered the tantalising prospect of answers to his perpetual question: why? His fiction, and *The Ice Palace* in particular, is the expression of his straining to hear the conversations of the cosmos.

■ *The Ice Palace* by Tarjei Vesaas, translated by Elizabeth Rokkan, is published by Penguin Modern Classics, price £7.99

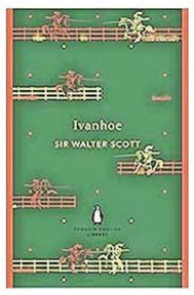
FIVE GREAT BOOKS WITH ANNIVERSARIES THIS YEAR



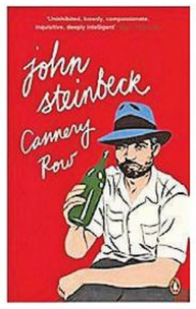
WOMEN IN LOVE
D.H. Lawrence
(Wordworth Classics, £2.50)
Out of the carnage of the First World War came one of Lawrence's most controversial novels. In portraying love affairs from the point of view of two sisters the author suffered outraged condemnation and accusations of depravity when *Women in Love* appeared in 1920. Salacious it wasn't, more a profound exploration of a war-shattered national psyche.



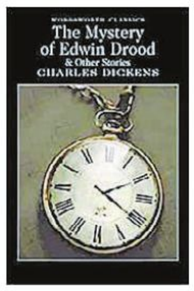
PIPPI LONGSTOCKING
Astrid Lindgren
(Oxford University Press, £5.99)
Published 75 years ago this year, Pippi Longstocking was Swedish writer Astrid Lindgren's first adventure with her nine-year-old creation, a pirate's daughter with a monkey and a horse for friends. Two further books would follow Pippi's 1945 debut followed by a handful of short stories about one of children's literature's most enduring characters.



IVANHOE
Walter Scott
(Penguin, £8.99)
Having appeared in serial form the previous year, Scott's *Ivanhoe* was published as a novel 200 years ago in the spring of 1820. Set in 12th century England, it was Scott's first departure from the near-contemporary Scottish novels for which he'd become renowned. Scholars such as John Ruskin, Thomas Carlyle and John Henry Newman all credited *Ivanhoe* with starting a revival in interest in the medieval whose influence is still felt today.



CANNERY ROW
John Steinbeck
(Penguin Modern Classics, £7.99)
Often overlooked in comparison with Steinbeck's epics like *The Grapes of Wrath* and *East of Eden*, *Cannery Row* is a brilliant depiction of life and lives among the fish canning plants of Monterey, California, during the Great Depression. Published 75 years ago this year, with its cast of itinerants, bums and unfortunates living in difficult circumstances *Cannery Row* is a surprisingly uplifting read and an underrated title among Steinbeck's remarkable output.



THE MYSTERY OF EDWIN DROOD
Charles Dickens
(Wordsworth Classics, £2.50)
Dickens' last, unfinished work was first published 150 years ago this year. When its author died in June 1870 he had completed six of a proposed 12 chapters concerning the disappearance of the eponymous character in the cathedral city of Cloisterham. Many authors subsequently attempted to finish the novel, the most unusual being an 1873 version by a Vermont medium claiming to have channelled the spirit of the dead Dickens himself.

EUROFILE POEM AND PUZZLES

a poem for europe

JOHN WHITE was active reading and writing poetry in the '70s and was published in Michael Horovitz's *New Departures*, before disappearing from view for the duration. He reappeared in 2013 and is currently a Poetry School/Newcastle University Writing Poetry MA student, and can often be heard reading around London

STORM ON THE WEST COAST

majestic weather systems
gather and circle in the Atlantic like orbiting dancers,
bear down upon us, who sit in despair
at windows, frightened and alone, lost to ourselves
our feet no longer touch the ground - some
play in clouds, and high on algorithms
count out their data, turn humans into sheeplike tribes,
predict behaviours, understanding no-one.

while the unruly wind that batters the double glazing,
the waves that thrash and roll out foam across the beach
are a kind of healing - vast unrelenting systems
that recall giants, and ancient gods,
they are the truth-speaking shamans who conjure scale,
stop us in our tracks, then bring us quiet and fortitude
and also choices.

some tramp the path along the coast
to feel our feet upon the earth and breathe in sky,
some close down bridges to traffic, some walk from school and scream
at politicians, while scientists, bless their systematic brains,
crunch out a different set of data, bring us news from the front
of crisis and hope.

our tribes are multifarious - we are old
and young, we sit in newbuild windows,
or face the coast in costly holiday homes
or traipse the stairs in 60s blocks where lifts are broken,
all stand upon the earth and feel the disturbance -
we hear the shaman voice of storms,
we make our choices.

A poem for Europe is edited by Briony Bax, Poetry Editor. Submit your poems to poetryeditor@theneweuropean.co.uk

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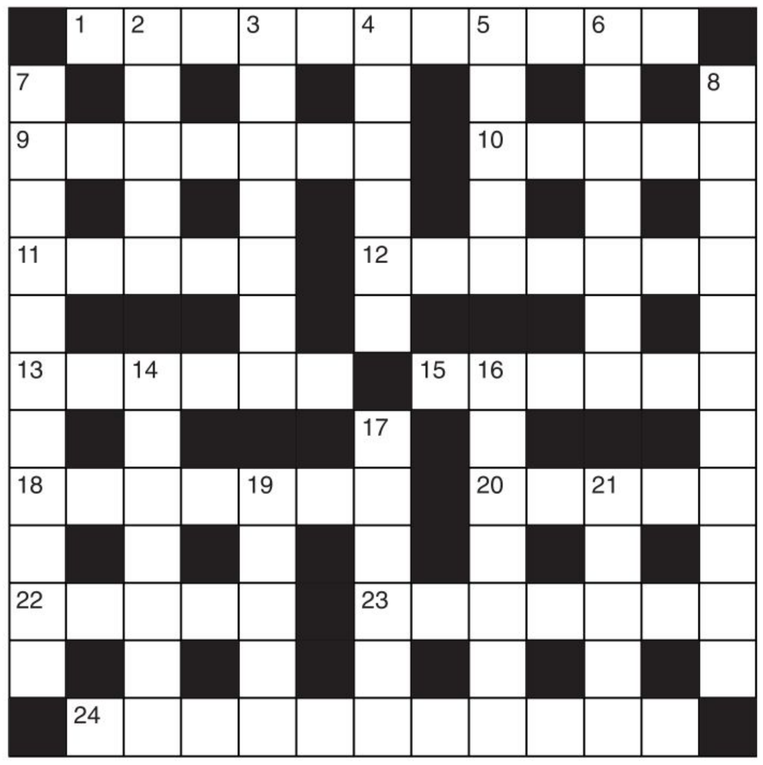
Cryptic crosswords sponsored by DORMONT ESTATE LIVING IN BALANCE WITH THE ENVIRONMENT www.dormontestate.com

Cryptic 1

Across
1. Being indisposed in the holiday leads to uncertainty of action (11)
9. Walk that follows a single dance (3-4)
10. Some of the college lecturers due to take up office (5)
11 & 15 Across. They remove the ground from beneath assistant colliers (11)
12. Not a place in the market where beef is sold (2-5)
13. Throat infection – you'll get the bird (6)
15. See 11 Across.
18. Being unable to settle down makes a small number crazy, I see (7)
20. This girl has opposite directions about America (5)
22. Makes an approach to northern listeners (5)
23. Stage-door, maybe, for singers in variety (7)
24. But they don't necessarily contain funeral cards (4,7)

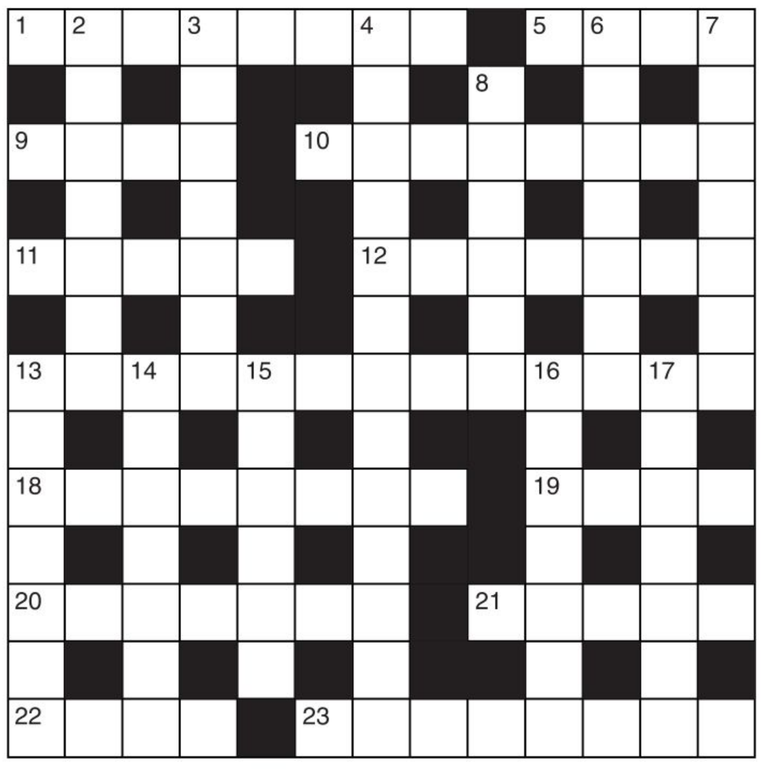
Down
2. What a principal has managed to get! (5)
3. Restricts people's movements in revolutions, we hear (7)
4. Could it be a greyhound going round the track? (3-3)
5. Overhead lock (5)
6. Do some cutting in the theatre (7)
7. In practice he's a stand-in (5-6)
8. No outmoded state (11)
14. Thoroughly search for strong drink before the game is ruined (7)
16. Practical knowledge in particular location, one hears (7)
17. He wrote a schoolboy translation in the south-east (6)
19. Given a course in physics (5)
21. This will pierce some of the oyster's pearls (5)



Cryptic 2

Across
1. About fighting retrogressive movement (8)
5. This will restrain a famous agent (4)
9. It shows what courses are available in some nurseries (4)
10. He's in a low joint – that's decidedly sticky (8)
11. Olive transformed by flimsy dress material (5)
12. Letters that are inclined to show stress (7)
13. Prepared computer for price table (5,8)
18. Sea check for important part of the rigging (8)
19. Coming from Southend at some time (4)
20. Biblical language Maria translated in short account (7)
21. Good sense shown by an early English parliament (5)
22. Unusually restricted diet (4)
23. This clue is treated with high regard (8)

Down
2. It's not a pretty sight when I take the air, we hear (7)
3. Paired off? (7)
4. Presumably they're not suitable for modern trippers (3-4,6)
6. There's nothing to fix one on a considered viewpoint (7)
7. Furniture for one employed backstage (7)
8. Assess the schoolboy's work again and make an observation (6)
13. A racket that needs skill for defence (7)
14. Cause a stir when it is in a football crowd (7)
15. No negative character (3-3)
16. Sketchy description of a queue waiting to leave? (7)
17. Give somebody a lift (7)



Crossword solutions

Cryptic 1
Across: 1 Vacillation; 9 One-step; 10 Elect; 11 Under; 12 Ox-stall; 13 Thrush; 15 Miners; 18 Nomadic; 20 Susan; 22 Nears; 23 Ingress; 24 Dead letters.
Down: 2 Ahead; 3 Interns; 4 Lap-dog; 5 Tress; 6 Operate; 7 Locum-tenens; 8 Stylishness; 14 Rummage; 16 Insight; 17 Scribe; 19 Dosed; 21 Spear.

Cryptic 2
Across: 1 Reaction; 5 Bond; 9 Menu; 10 Adhesive; 11 Voile; 12 Italics; 13 Ready reckoner; 18 Mainstay; 19 Then; 20 Aramaic; 21 Witan; 22 Tied; 23 Esteemed. **Down:** 2 Eyesore; 3 Coupled; 4 Old-time dances; 6 Opinion; 7 Dresser; 8 Remark; 13 Rampart; 14 Agitate; 15 Yes-man; 16 Outline; 17 Elevate.

Sudoku solutions

Medium 1

7	2	9	5	3	1	4	6	8
8	5	4	2	7	6	3	9	1
1	3	6	4	9	8	5	2	7
5	6	1	7	8	4	2	3	9
3	8	2	6	5	9	1	7	4
9	4	7	1	2	3	8	5	6
2	1	8	3	6	7	9	4	5
4	7	3	9	1	5	6	8	2
6	9	5	8	4	2	7	1	3

Medium 2

6	5	9	8	1	3	2	4	7
1	4	8	9	2	7	6	5	3
3	7	2	5	6	4	1	9	8
5	6	4	1	8	2	7	3	9
9	3	1	6	7	5	8	2	4
2	8	7	3	4	9	5	1	6
8	1	5	4	9	6	3	7	2
7	9	3	2	5	8	4	6	1
4	2	6	7	3	1	9	8	5

Hard 1

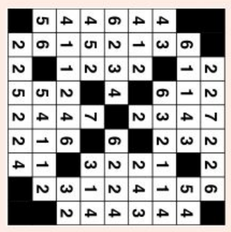
5	9	6	8	7	2	4	3	1
1	8	4	3	9	6	5	2	7
3	7	2	1	4	5	8	6	9
7	4	3	2	8	9	6	1	5
9	1	5	6	3	7	2	8	4
2	6	8	5	1	4	9	7	3
6	2	7	4	5	3	1	9	8
8	5	9	7	6	1	3	4	2
4	3	1	9	2	8	7	5	6

Hard 2

8	9	2	5	4	1	7	6	3
7	1	5	8	3	6	9	4	2
6	3	4	9	7	2	8	5	1
1	5	8	6	2	9	3	7	4
4	6	7	3	5	8	2	1	9
9	2	3	7	1	4	6	8	5
2	8	9	4	6	5	1	3	7
3	4	6	1	9	7	5	2	8
5	7	1	2	8	3	4	9	6

Numberfit solutions

1



2

Sudoku – medium 1

7		9					6	
			2		6			1
1		6		9		5		
	6			8	4		3	
		2	6		9	1		
	4		1	2			5	
		8		6		9		5
4			9		5			
	9					7		3

Sudoku – medium 2

			8	1			4	
		8				6		3
	7		5	6			9	
5		4	1		2			
9		1				8		4
			3		9	5		6
	1			9	6		7	
7		3				4		
	2			3	1			

Sudoku – hard 1

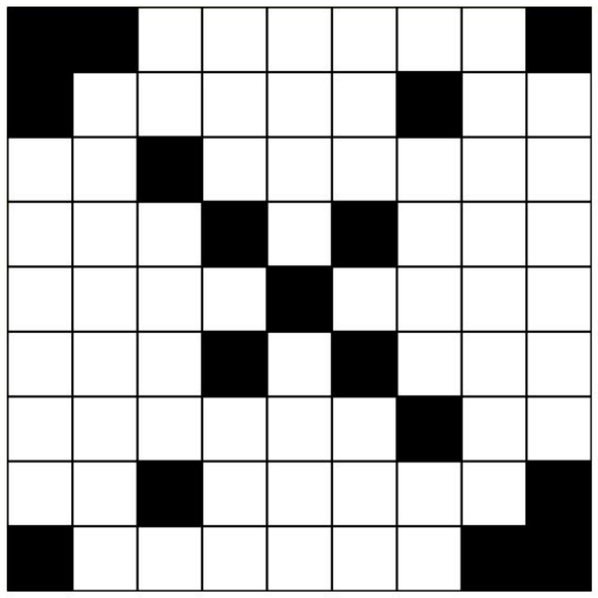
	9				2	4		
1		4			6			
	7					8		9
			2		9		1	5
2	6		5		4			
6		7					9	
			7			3		2
		1	9				5	

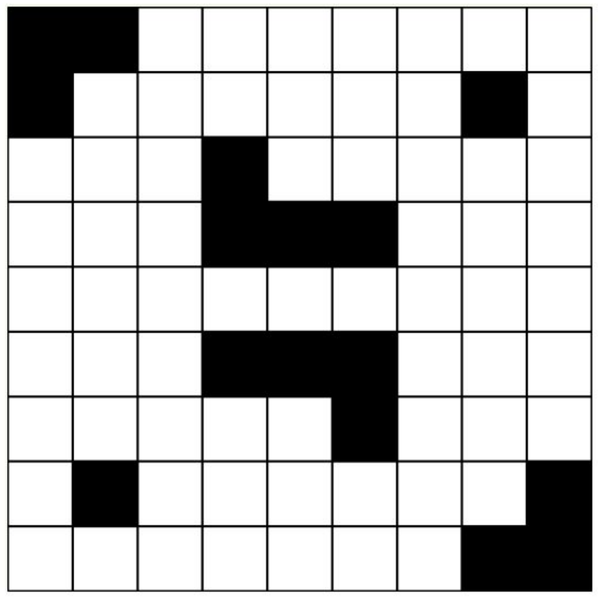
Sudoku – hard 2

				4	1		6	
		5				9		2
	3			7			5	
			6					4
4		7				2		9
9					4			
	8			6			3	
3		6				5		
	7		2	8				

Numberfit

Fit the listed numbers into each grid.





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STRICTLY SPEAKING

PETER TRUDGILL traces the linguistic backgrounds of the stars of the hit BBC dancing show

Advocates of nativism, and anti-immigration nationalists, might like to consider the debt England sports teams owe to inward migration. Of the current cricket Test match squad, Jofra Archer was originally from Barbados, Sam Curran from Zimbabwe, and Ben Stokes from New Zealand. The England football squad owes even more to immigration: Ben Chilwell's father came from New Zealand, Fikayo Tomori was born in Canada, Harry Winks has Spanish ancestry, Tammy Abraham's father came from Nigeria, and the fathers of Callum Hudson-Odoi and Trent Alexander-Arnold were also of African origin. James Maddison, Declan Rice, and Harry Kane could have played for Ireland because of their ancestry. Danny Rose's parents and Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain's grandparents emigrated from Jamaica, and Raheem Sterling was born there; Jadon Sancho's parents are from Trinidad, and Marcus Rashford's family from St Kitts – where would we be without the Windrush generation?

Advocates of an English-only language policy for England might also like to consider the role of multilingual people in one of the most popular programmes on British television. The BBC's *Strictly Come Dancing* averages something like 10 million viewers per episode, and the part played by participants who are not monolingual English speakers or are not English in origin is enormous.

One of the three professional dancers in the 2019 *Strictly* final, Oti Mabuse, *pictured*, comes from South Africa. She speaks extremely fluent English, but her mother tongue is Xhosa, a Bantu language with about eight million native speakers which is also widely spoken as a second language in the republic. Oti also speaks five other South African languages, including Afrikaans, which was originally a colonial form of Dutch; she claims that this helped her learn German when she first started working in Germany, as Dutch and German are very closely related.

Of the other two professional dancers in the 2019 final, Amy Dowden is Welsh, and Anton du Beke has a very interesting linguistic background. He was born Anthony Beke, and both his parents came from other EU countries – his father was Hungarian and his mother is Spanish. Anton grew up speaking their native languages in addition to English, but says that he is now no longer able to do so.

The parents of one of the three celebrity finalists, Karim Zeroual, are of Moroccan origin. We tend to think of Morocco as being an Arabic-speaking country, but Zeroual is a name borne by a number of Berber-speaking families there. Arabic is not native to North Africa; the indigenous languages of the region are all varieties of Berber (also known as Amazigh), and more than half the population of Morocco today speak a Berber language.

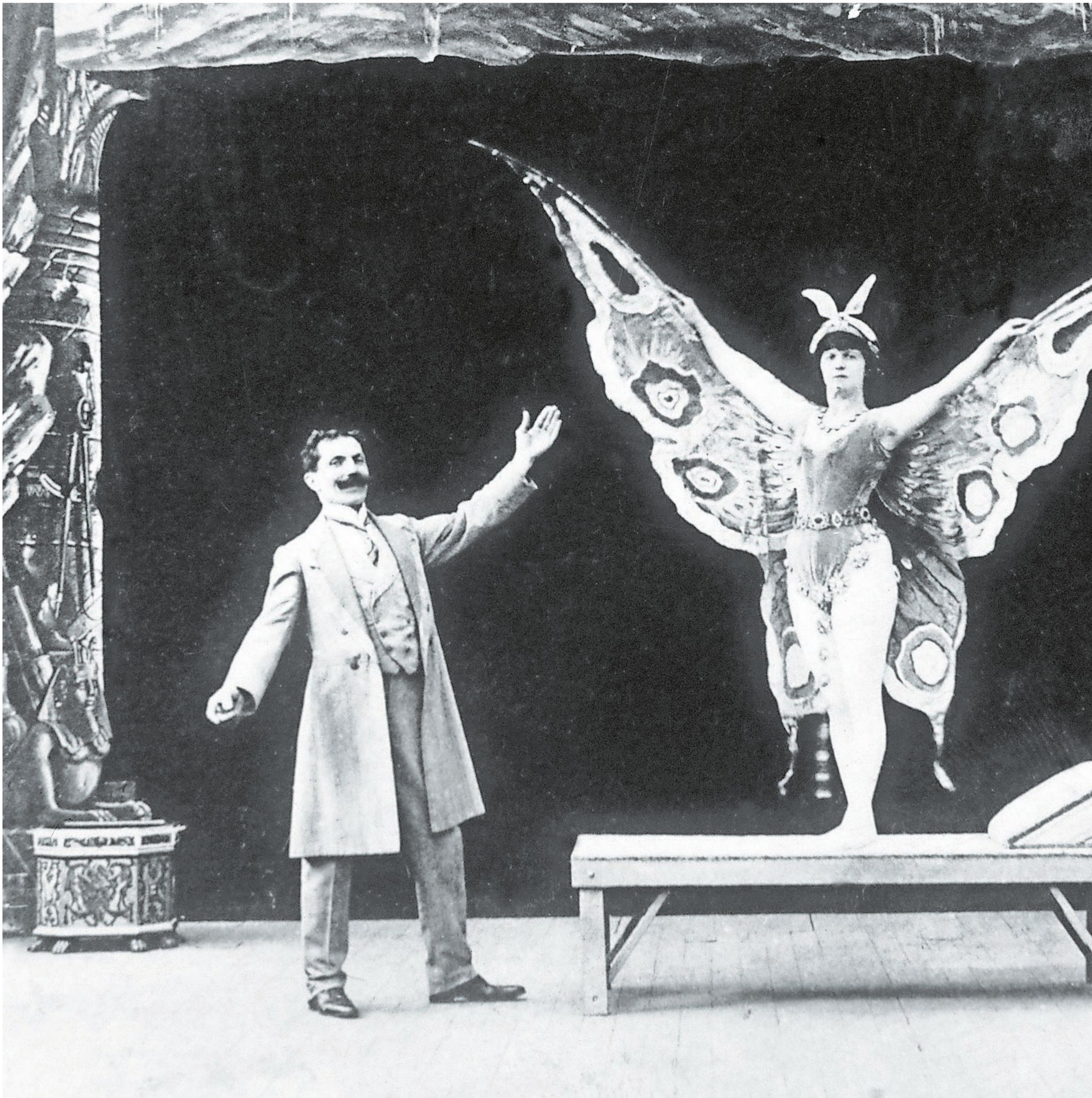
When it comes to the *Strictly* judges, Shirley Ballas is English, but she has a Greek-language surname from her ex-husband, who was the grandson of Greek emigrants to the USA. Craig Revel Horwood is Australian. And Motsi Mabuse, the sister of Oti, has the same linguistic background as Oti but lives in Germany with her Ukrainian husband and speaks German fluently. The fourth judge is Bruno Tonioli, a native Italian speaker. He has lived in England for more than 40 years and, in addition to speaking extremely fluent and expressive English, apparently manages rather well in French, Spanish and Portuguese. And one of the two presenters, Claudia Winkleman, had grandparents and great-grandparents who were variously speakers of German, Hungarian, Yiddish and Russian.

And this is just sport and entertainment. The roles which incomers from other countries, and multilingualism generally, have played in the fields of medicine, science, culture, business, and industry are incalculable.

If everybody had stayed where they were, if England had been only for the English, if there had been no emigration or immigration, and if everyone had been monolingual in English, then England would be a very much poorer and more dreary place. Whatever you think about *Strictly*, it certainly isn't dreary.

XHOSA

Xhosa is well known to be one of the languages in the world – all of them in Africa – which use click sounds as consonants. The letter combination xh in Xhosa represents a click sound which is not totally unlike the clicking noises Englishmen were traditionally supposed to make to horses.



PIONEER: Georges Méliès plays the role of a magician with a female assistant in one of the early French cinematographer's films c1900

Photo: Getty Images

GREAT EUROPEAN LIVES

BY CHARLIE CONNELLY

#131 GEORGES MÉLIÈS

DECEMBER 8, 1861 – JANUARY 21, 1938

By the spring of 1929 Jean-Placide Mauclaire had grown used to being given old reels of film. The previous year he had opened Studio 28, an art house cinema in the Montmartre district of Paris that quickly became an important landmark by attracting the great and good of the Parisian cultural milieu. Success also meant regular unsolicited deliveries of films good, passable but mostly hopeless. So when a friend brought in a cardboard box of film reels that had turned up in the dairy shed of a chateau somewhere in Normandy, Mauclaire almost dumped them without looking at them.

He decided to run one or two through the projector just in case, at which point he soon realised these old films were very special indeed. Many of them weren't in the greatest condition but the craft and skill that had gone into their production were so obvious that Mauclaire sat up in his chair almost as the first frames flickered onto the screen. There were costume dramas, comedies, romances and playful tableaux involving magic and illusion. There were special effects and trick photography pulled off with a mixture of technical brilliance and showman's panache, clearly the work of a craftsman with a love for the medium and a sense of mischief that never became self-indulgent.

Mauclaire watched the entire contents of the box. Most of the films didn't have credits, but on a card at the end of one of them he glimpsed a name to confirm the suspicions that had grown since he'd watched the very first scenes: this was a trove of films made by Georges Méliès. Most excitingly, the friend who delivered the box had told him there were more, prompting Mauclaire to spend the next week rummaging in the Normandy milking shed to retrieve some 900 reels of film, the majority of them by Méliès.

Most people will be familiar with the black and white image of an anthropomorphic moon being poked in the eye by a space rocket. It's from Méliès' 1902 *Le Voyage dans la Lune* (*A Trip to the Moon*) and remains one of the most famous shots in the history of cinema. *Le Voyage...*, in which Méliès himself stars as the leader of a lunar expedition, is widely credited as the first science fiction film and almost always features in round-ups of the greatest pieces of cinema ever made.

Less than three decades after its release, however, as Mauclaire explored his treasure trove, its creator and star had been practically forgotten. The film business had moved on; pictures now came with sound and were shot with close-ups and different camera angles. The rigid-camera silence of Méliès' work was already ancient history in a fast-moving medium.

Fortunately Mauclaire retained a strong appreciation of Méliès' importance and set about planning a major retrospective, the highlight of which he decided would be an appearance by the man himself. All he had to do was find Georges Méliès, who hadn't made a film in years and had been effectively missing since before the First World War.

Méliès' almost complete disappearance from the world of cinema was partly due to changing tastes, partly down to his own actions but equally due to sheer bad luck. At the outbreak of the war he'd had his own film studio and ran a theatre he had owned since 1888. The former was requisitioned as a hospital by the army and would never be his again, the latter would be demolished in 1923 to make way for a new road. But Méliès' fortunes were already in decline, despite his having revolutionised cinema across the world in the early years of the 20th century.

The moment that had transformed Méliès' life came in December 1895. He'd been running the Théatre Robert-Houdin for seven years at that point, appearing regularly as a popular stage magician and illusionist. Just after Christmas he attended a demonstration of the Lumiere brothers' new moving picture camera-projector in a basement room beneath Paris's Salon Indien du Grand Café and was entranced by the short films that filled the room with the magic of moving pictures.

Captivated by the new technology Méliès approached the Lumieres and offered them 10,000 francs for one of their machines. He was turned down, Antoine Lumiere reportedly telling him he'd be wasting his time as well as his money as "the motion picture is an invention without a future".

Convinced otherwise, Méliès sourced a similar machine in London and within a year was making and presenting short films whose technical influence is still visible in the cinema we know today. Substitution, double-exposure, dissolves and stop motion, they all started with Méliès who not only had the vision to dream up these experimental advances but could pull them off convincingly even with rudimentary technology.

His early films were short, beautifully made and brimmed with charm. *Escamotage d'une dame chez Robert-Houdin* (*The Vanishing Lady*), for example, made in 1896 and one of his earliest films, mimicked his act as a stage magician. Filmed at his theatre, a woman sits on a chair and the film-maker drapes a cloth over her with his magician's panache. There's a jump cut, he whips away the cloth and the woman is no longer there. Méliès' visible delight in the success of this trick more than compensates for what would now be seen as a fairly brutal cut; the fact he could shine on the screen was as important to his success as his technical brilliance. There's a more successful effect when he attempts to bring her back, whips off the cloth with a flourish – and reveals a skeleton sitting on the chair, not just an impressive piece of filmmaking but also a gag of perfect comic timing.

Five years later came *L'homme à la tête de caoutchouc* (*The Man with the Rubber Head*), a brilliant piece of comedy in which Méliès plays a scientist who places a copy of his own head, blinking and gurning, onto a table and inflates it with a pair of comically large bellows until it nearly fills the screen, an effect achieved by superimposing footage of himself moving towards the camera to make it appear his head was inflating, then placing it onto the static footage of the laboratory set. Again, Méliès showed with this film that he wasn't just a technical innovator, he was also a natural comedian: the reactions of his scientist would have graced the later work of Chaplin and Keaton.

Le Voyage dans la Lune established his worldwide reputation. The same year, 1902, he also made a mocked-up newsreel of Edward VII's coronation and adapted *Gulliver's Travels* to demonstrate he was much more than a gag man and trickster.

Despite his imagination and screen presence, however, as the motion picture took off in the US and forged ahead in terms of equipment and the filmmaking craft, Méliès stuck rigidly to his static camera filming a theatrical stage set. As the years passed his films, while still hugely accomplished, no longer displayed the panache and *joie de vivre* of his prime and his popularity began to decline. A distribution contract he signed in 1910 with Pathé intended to kickstart his career would prove to be his undoing. By 1913, having overstretched himself and his studio financially, he was forced to break the contract, effectively forfeiting ownership of his home and the studio complex he had built at Montreuil. The war delayed inevitable repossessions, but when in 1917 the French army moved into the studio they requisitioned hundreds of reels of Méliès' films and melted them down to make boot heels from the silver and celluloid. In 1923, the same year Méliès' theatre was demolished, Pathé were finally able to confiscate his properties to which he responded in temper by burning everything that was left: film stock, sets and costumes. He was angry, bitter – and ruined.

By the time Mauclaire tracked him down Méliès was nearly 70 years old and working at his wife's tobacconist stall on the concourse of the Gare Montparnasse, selling sweets, cigarettes and newspapers to commuters. "One afternoon in July 1929 before an emotional Méliès I screened *Papillon fantastique*, *Le locataire diabolique*, *Les 400 coups du diable* and *La Fée Carabosse*, some of his finest work," Mauclaire would later recall. In the flickering light of the screen he could see tears rolling down the old man's cheeks as he watched. Later that year Méliès was feted on the stage at Mauclaire's Studio 28 retrospective, his reputation restored. Most of his hundreds of films were lost a long time ago but more than 200 survive, their transfer from decaying celluloid to digital ensuring the immortality of one of cinema's true pioneers.

WILL SELF

Multicultural Man .. on Brexit

I'm a Brexit agnostic – as readers of my diary, published in *The New European* last March, will know. I didn't start off this way, oh no – I was a good Remainer like the rest of my ilk. What ilk? I hear you cry. Why, the metropolitan liberal elite, of course – because they really do exist, and I've spent a goodly portion of my life listening to them virtue-signal, tit-beat, and generally agonise over each and every one of their privileges, while doing precious little to extend them to the rest of the populace. That's right: the principal characteristic of this cultural formation is that it's almost indistinguishable from the lesser-spotted, Boden-catalogue-clothed, socially liberal variety of Tory, who, having smitten its own breast for a while, has, at this late hour – and with considerable relief – fallen in behind the prime minister's capacious… behind, as he leads Britain towards a new dawn.

That's right: if I think about the progressive types I've shared dinner parties and cultural events of various sorts with over the years, and I disregard what they've said in favour of what they've done, it occurs to me that their much-vaunted principles have been, for the most part, a lot of hot, chèvre-smelling air. Apart from dutifully ticking the right box next to the name of the leftish candidate every few years – and the aforementioned virtue signalling – they've sent their kids to private schools, taken expensive holidays in other people's misery, avoided their taxes, and obsessed about the value of their properties just like their right-wing conspecifics.

As for the so-called 'upstream' cultural changes that they vigorously champion; making sure that women and minorities have their fair share of representation in these arenas is indeed a laudable aim – but isn't it funny how the underlying structures of power and privilege remain firmly in place, despite more polyglot Radio 4 panel games. As for the European project, were the metropolitan liberal elite really signed up to it anymore than 'Call me Dave' Cameron, and the other Tory vacillators? The option I wanted on the ballot in 2016 was: s**t, or get off the pot. And by sh**ting, I mean the whole business of ever-closer union was to be taken seriously.

I'm talking European army, properly elected parliament with concomitant powers and sovereignty – I'm talking a constitution, an *Ode to Joy* and the entire bang-shoot we associate with a state. If a state is conceived of as a monopoly on violence – either in the form of external threat or internal fissiparousness – then the inchoate European one really should've coalesced after the fall of the Berlin Wall, and certainly should've stepped in to stop the erection of concentration camps in its holiday destinations, when Yugoslavia disintegrated. Instead, Bill Clinton had to bomb Belgrade, and Europe went on being the Pentagon's poodle.

Of course, all of this had transpired a full quarter-century before the Brexit referendum – which, in turn, was 11 years after the French electorate had thrown a huge spanner in the delicately calibrated works by rejecting the European Constitution in their own plebiscite. Kafka, the European prose-

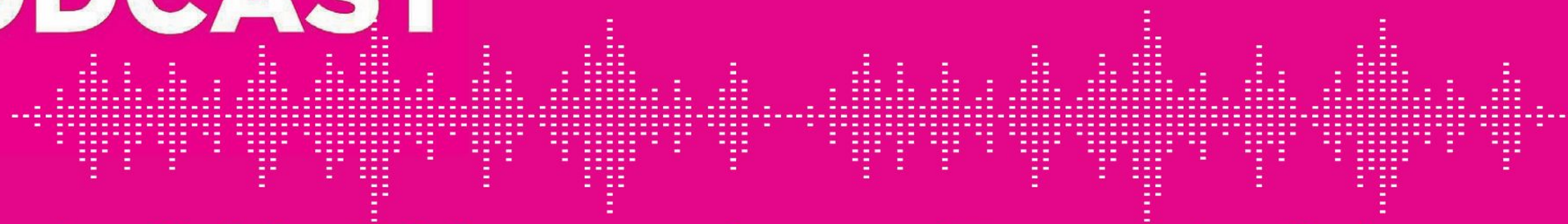
VIRTUE SIGNALLING: A Remain campaigner protests in the wake of the referendum result – but Will Self declares himself a Brexit agnostic Photo: Getty Images

laureate of infinite deferral, comes to mind here: for his protagonists – much as for the European Union – it's always too late already. When Gregor Samsa awakes from troubled dreams, he has already turned into a monstrous cockroach – just as when Josef K comes to consciousness, despite being blameless, he has already been arrested. The belatedness of the liberal impulse also seems inbuilt to me – the very nemesis summoned by its own hubristic tendencies: for what liberals aspire to is a painless politics of perfect progress, whereas the truth is that most human policy-making – certainly at the macro level – occurs *ex post facto*: everyone gives up smoking, then Tony Blair takes the credit, just as a majority decide they've had enough prevarication over Brexit – and Boris Johnson takes the credit.

Momentous changes are indeed afoot, as the British island – politically speaking, at least – detaches itself still further from the main; but I wonder if, deprived of its ideological fig leaf, there's much to be seen in the way of post-imperial priapism? At the birth of the state, in the floodplains of the Tigris and the Euphrates, many millennia before the Christian era, it was necessary for emergent elites to corral their subjects in order to ensure the surplus food production upon which their power and privilege depended. But for decades now, the proto-European state has been a watchword for useless agricultural over-production – while its principle anxiety has been the incursion of stateless migrants from the south, the 21st century equivalents of the Romans' feared 'barbarian hordes'. Under such circumstances, is it any surprise that the culture became altogether flaccid, and quite incapable of re-birthing itself through a dramatic act of parthenogenesis?

Instead, in Berlin as much as Brighton – and in Bristol quite as much as Belgrade, liberals of all types continue with the cheesy breath, while in the corners of the map, the cherubic cheeks swell, prior to the venting of a real wind, which may well blow them all away.

THE NEW EUROPEAN PODCAST



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